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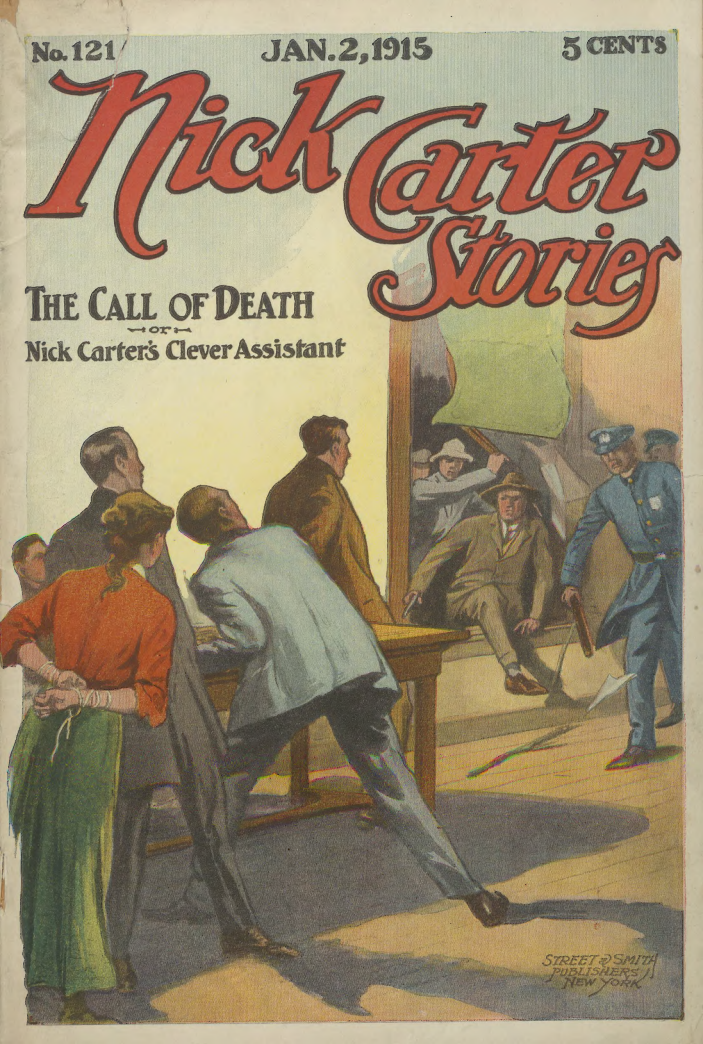
Nick Carter Stories

THE CALL OF DEATH

OR

Nick Carter's Clever Assistant



NICK CARTER STORIES

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THE CALL OF DEATH;

Or, NICK CARTER'S CLEVER ASSISTANT.

Edited by CHICKERING CARTER.

CHAPTER I.

A CURIOUS LETTER.

"There's no question in my mind, inspector, as to who did the job," said Nick Carter.

"You feel sure of it, then?"

"As sure as water runs downhill. I refer, of course, to the mechanical part of the work. I looked it over on the morning following the burglary, every part of the looted vault, and I am as sure of the cracksman's identity as if I had seen him getting in his work. Only one yegg in the business has the mechanical genius to crack a vault as that was cracked."

"James Nordeck?"

"Surely. I have seen Nordeck's work before, and I know it when I see it. It is invariably stamped with his mechanical ingenuity. Jim Nordeck is in a class of his own at that business."

"Here is his mug, front and profile, chief, also his record. Have a look at them."

The last came from Chick Carter, the celebrated detective's senior assistant, and the remarks of both were addressed to Inspector Mallory, then head of the detective force identified with the New York police department.

They were discussing the recent burglary of a savings bank up in Westchester County, a crime committed about a week before, in which the remarkably skillful drilling of the vault for the use of explosives, as well as other details of the felonious work, plainly showed it to have been that of professional cracksmen.

As may be inferred from the remarks he had just made, it revealed something more to Nick Carter—the identity of one of the criminals, at least, with certain characteristics of whose skillful work along such infamous lines the detective was already familiar.

Though discovered before having completed their work, the burglars had succeeded in getting away with nearly two hundred thousand dollars in cash, bonds, and negotiable securities; but not until one of their number had been seriously wounded with the revolver of a citizen who had heard and pursued them, as was evidenced by a trail of blood, to the motor car in which they escaped with their plunder.

None of it had since been recovered. Negotiations with the crooks had been undertaken by the bank officials through the newspapers, with a view to recovering part of the stolen funds, and a liberal reward had also been offered for information leading to the discovery and arrest of the thieves. All of these endeavors, however, had proved entirely futile.

The trail of the crooks had, in fact, been hopelessly lost. Nor was there any clew to their identity, aside from the opinion expressed by Nick Carter on the day following the crime, when he had been called upon to inspect the work of the burglars, despite the fact that he had declined to take the case in conjunction with the police and detectives already employed on it.

Nick's views had been mentioned to Inspector Mallory, and this had occasioned his visit that morning, and the discussion then in progress in the business office of the detective's Madison Avenue residence, then occupied only by the three persons mentioned.

Inspector Mallory took the card tendered by Chick Carter with the remarks above noted. It had been taken by Chick from a large cabinet of drawers containing the Bertillon signaletic cards of thousands of other crooks, and it contained two photographs and the criminal record of the man then under discussion.

The face that met the inspector's gaze was not a prepossessing one. It was that of a man of fifty—a hard and sinister face, with a low brow and narrow eyes, a hooked nose, like the beak of a bird of prey, a square jaw, and thin lips, drawn downward at the corners—a more evil and cruel face than one often viewed.

"He looks like a bad egg, indeed, Chick," said Inspector Mallory, grimly inspecting the two photographs.

"His looks flatter him," Chick replied. "He's the worst in the business."

"His record corroborates you," said the inspector, while he read the criminal career noted on the card. "He appears to have been extraordinarily lucky, however, in eluding arrest and doing time."

"Lucky is right," Nick put in. "He has been peculiarly fortunate in that respect, Mallory, but very unlucky in others."

"How so, Nick?"

"I happen to know something about the inside history of the rascal," Nick explained. "I got it from one of his old pals, Darby Moore, who died in Matteawan less than a year ago."

"I knew him," Inspector Mallory said.

"Aside from his legitimate trade as a machinist, at which Nordeck is an expert, he has absolutely no head on his shoulders," Nick proceeded. "He could not frame up and pull off a job of any size, to say nothing of this savings-bank break, if his life depended upon it. He can work to advantage only when guided by a capable leader. Take it from me, Mallory, this Westchester job was directed by such a man, not by Jim Nordeck. There was a much bigger man than he behind the gun."

"Do you know him, Nick?" questioned Mallory, with sharper scrutiny.

"I do not."

"Or suspect his identity?"

"No."

"What do you mean by Nordeck's having been peculiarly unfortunate?"

"In that he has been repeatedly cheated by his confederates out of most of his share of the plunder," Nick explained. "He has been an easy mark in that respect ever since his wife died, something like a dozen years ago. She was a shrewd Englishwoman, but thoroughly unscrupulous, who looked after his interests and handled his money. Since her death, however, though he is known to have had a hand in numerous profitable jobs, Nordeck has been hard up most of the time."

"Through having been victimized by his confederates?"

"Exactly. He now fights shy of trusting them, even."

"You got all this from Darby Moore?"

"Yes. I had an interview with him on the day he died. I know he told me the truth."

"This card states that Nordeck has a daughter, who is also a crook."

"That is correct."

"Do you know her, or anything about her?"

"I have seen her," Nick replied. "I saw her less than a month ago, in fact, which is another reason why I feel sure that Nordeck had a hand in this burglary."

"She sticks to him, eh?"

"That's what! They never have been separated. I knew the moment I saw her that Jim Nordeck was in these parts, and that something was likely to come off."

"Why didn't you track the girl to cover?"

"It was impossible, Mallory, under the circumstances."

"Why so?"

"She was in an elevated train going north, and I was in another going south," smiled Nick. "Both trains had stopped at a station, and I saw her through one of the windows. I could not wish myself from one train to another."

"True," Inspector Mallory admitted, laughing. "Have you see the girl since then?"

"No."

"How old is she?"

"Not much over twenty," said Nick. "Her name is Nancy Nordeck, though I guess she uses an alias most of the time."

"Yes, no doubt," Mallory dryly allowed.

"She looked very seedy, as well as I could judge through the car window," Nick added. "This savings-bank break may replenish her purse, however, and put Jim Nordeck in funds. If his pals don't bunco him, he ought to be well heeled for some little time—unless some of your men succeed in rounding up this gang. I infer that there is no immediate prospect of it."

"No, I am sorry to say," Inspector Mallory admitted.

"I see that the bank directors have offered a reward of ten thousand dollars for the recovery of the plunder."

"Yes. They can well afford to pay that for it."

"And then some," put in Chick pointedly. "I doubt that any of the gang who did that job will squeal, however, for it smacks of crooks who keep their traps closed under any and all circumstances. If they——"

"Stop a moment!" Nick interposed. "What is wanted, Joseph?"

The office door had been opened by Nick's manservant, who then paused respectfully on the threshold.

"Detective Vallon is here, sir," he replied. "He wants to see Inspector Mallory."

"Vallon here!" exclaimed Mallory surprisedly. "Let him come in, Nick. I'll see what he wants."

"Show him in, Joseph," Nick directed.

He entered a moment later, a plain-clothes man, from police headquarters, with whom both Nick and Chick shook hands cordially, while he was briefly stating his mission.

"I've got a special delivery for you, inspector," said he. "It is marked private and rush, and I reckoned it might be very important. The lieutenant said I'd be likely to find you here, so here I am—and here's the letter."

Inspector Mallory took it and glanced at the superscription. It was addressed with a lead pencil, in a somewhat coarse, irregular hand, which, with the misspelling of several words, plainly evinced the writer's lack of education. Prominent in the lower corners of the envelope were the two words—rush and private.

"Humph!" Mallory grunted, with a puzzled expression. "Mailed this morning in Harlem. I don't know the hand. Never saw one quite so scrawly. It may be important, nevertheless, Vallon, as you say."

Chief Mallory broke the seal while speaking, then drew out the inclosed sheet of paper.

A folded bank note slipped from it and fell to the floor.

"By Jove, chief, that's a good beginning!" said Chick, laughing.

"I believe your story," Mallory replied, bending to pick up the bank note. "Hello! Fifty bucks, too, and a brand-new bill. I could stand a gift of this kind every day in the year."

It was, indeed, a crisp, brand-new bank note for fifty dollars.

Nick Carter eyed the inspector more narrowly when

he opened and read the letter, noting his gradual change of expression.

"By thunder, here's a curious case!" Mallory exclaimed, looking up. "It cannot be a hoax, not with fifty simoleons backing up the story. Have a look, Nick. Read it aloud."

Nick took the letter and read it aloud, as directed, a penciled, illiterate scrawl, as follows:

"'Mr. Inspector Mallory: There be a ded man up in number aity to P—— Street, Harlem. I want him planted rite, but I ain't got no time to tend to it. I know you are ded square when it comes to a show-down, so I send you the coin to foot the bills with, and I ax you to tend to him. Git him a good box with black cloth on the outside of it and silver grips. I would ax you to git a silver plait, to, only I can't tell you his monaker. I thank you beforehand, knowing you will tend to him. Please have a praer sed for him.'"

Nick Carter read this rude scrawl indifferently at first, then glanced at it again more carefully.

Mallory, watching him, detected a sharper gleam deep down in his more serious eyes. He straightened up and inquired abruptly:

"What do you think of it?"

"It's on the level," said Nick. "The woman means what she says."

"Woman?" questioned Mallory quickly. "How do you know a woman wrote it? It isn't signed."

"True."

"And the writing looks like a man's?"

"True again."

"Why do you think, then, that a woman wrote it?"

"Sentiment," said Nick tersely. "It appears between the lines, illiterate though they are. We very seldom find it in men of the class in which the writer of this evidently falls."

"A fallen class, evidently," remarked Detective Vallon.

"Possibly," Nick allowed. "She has a high opinion of you, Mallory, all the same. Very properly, too."

"Thanks!" blurted the chief a bit gruffly.

"You had better go up there and look into the case. Fifty dollars will more than foot the bills. It's quite remarkable, by the way, where the writer raised that amount, and—let me see the bank note, Mallory."

"It looks all right," said the inspector, complying.

"True," said Nick. "It is not a counterfeit, but evidently is fresh from—— Yes, by Jove, you had better go up there," he abruptly digressed. "If you think well of it, Mallory, I'll go with you."

"I shall be more than pleased," declared Mallory, with a look of surprise.

"I'll have my chauffeur bring around the touring car," added Nick, touching an electric button on his desk. "There will be room for you, Chick, and for Vallon, also, if he cares to go."

"I'm hooked," Vallon quickly nodded. "Count me in."

As the four detectives were descending the steps of Nick's residence five minutes later, however, at which his touring car then was standing, a rapidly driven limousine approached and swerved to the curbing near by.

Nick paused instinctively, then approached to meet a handsome, fashionably clad young woman, who had hurriedly alighted and drawn nearer.

"You were going away, Mr. Carter, and I am just in time," she said quietly yet in some excitement. "You must postpone it. I must see you alone immediately—no, no, don't refuse! I'll not take no for an answer. I really must see you. It's a case of life or death."

"What is the trouble, Miss Farley?" Nick gravely inquired, noting her paleness.

"I cannot tell you here—not here!" she whispered. "Do please give me your time. Money is no object, Mr. Carter, and——"

"Hush!"

Nick turned to the men in the touring car.

"I must cut out the visit to Harlem, inspector," he said significantly. "Chick will go with you, however, and—— Well, you understand."

"Certainly, Nick, certainly!" Inspector Mallory assured him. "There is nothing involved in it. Chick will inform you later of all the facts. No apology is necessary."

"Let her go, Danny," Chick directed, when Nick turned to rejoin the waiting woman. "No. 82 P—— Street, Harlem. Eat it up lively!"

CHAPTER II.

THE MISSING RECTOR.

Nick Carter had more than one reason for complying with the request of the young lady who had arrived at his residence just as he was departing.

Nick was influenced not only by her manifest anxiety and agitation, but also by the fact that her wealthy father, Archibald Farley, who had died about a year before, leaving her something like five millions, had been a personal friend, and had frequently entertained him in his magnificent Westchester mansion.

Nick knew, moreover, that Harriet Farley was a remarkably sensible, level-headed girl, and that she would not thus have appealed to him without very serious occasion. He conducted her into his library, therefore, instead of to his business office, that he might suffer no interruption.

"Take an armchair, Miss Farley," said he, placing one for her. "Compose yourself, too, for I see that you are quite nervous. What is the trouble?"

"I ought not to have come in here, Mr. Carter, for I want you to go with me," she replied. "It may be just as well, however, if I first tell you the cause of my anxiety."

"I think so," said Nick, taking a chair near her.

She was a very beautiful girl, in the twenties, of light complexion, and with wonderfully blue, expressive eyes. Her features were of a refined and classic cast, evincing culture and strength of character. Her head was finely poised and crowned with an abundance of wavy auburn hair. She was above medium height, with a supple, graceful figure, the attractive lines of which were accentuated by her close-fitting, fashionable garments.

"You must not think my fear is foolish, Mr. Carter, nor my interest in this matter presumptuous," she said earnestly, replying to the detective's remark. "I have serious reasons for both, and I shall insist upon your investigating the matter immediately, if I can prevail upon you to do so."

"Your father and I were very good friends, Miss Farley," Nick replied. "I would be very glad to be of service to you."

"I felt sure of it, Mr. Carter, thank you."

"What is the matter to which you refer?"

"It relates to the disappearance of quite a noted young clergyman, the Reverend Austin Maybrick, rector of St. Lawrence Church, which I attend. I know that he has met with evil of some kind."

"I know Mr. Maybrick very well by reputation," said Nick. "He is fast becoming noted for his eloquence, his advanced ideas, and his charitable work among the lowest classes. He has a very wealthy parish, I believe?"

"Yes, very; it includes some of the richest residents of Westchester County."

"You say that Mr. Maybrick is mysteriously missing?"

"Yes."

"Since when?"

"Since nine o'clock last evening."

"But that is not long," said Nick significantly. "Surely, Miss Farley——"

"I know what you would say, Mr. Carter, but it would have no weight with me," she hurriedly interposed. "I am absolutely sure that he is the victim of knavery of some kind."

"But why are you so sure of it? Have you any definite reasons?"

"Yes, many."

"Tell me," said Nick, "what are your reasons, and the circumstances in connection with his disappearance."

Miss Farley drew up in her chair. A wave of red appeared in her cheeks and dispelled her paleness. She met Nick's grave scrutiny with outward composure, however, and replied with characteristic frankness:

"I must begin, Mr. Carter, with telling you of my relations with Mr. Maybrick. He has been very kind to me since my father died a year ago, leaving me very wealthy, but deplorably alone in the world. Mr. Maybrick called often during my father's illness, and his visits have been even more frequent since his death. They have given rise to rumors, Mr. Carter, that Mr. Maybrick and I are in love, and likely to be married."

"Is there any truth in them?" Nick inquired.

"Yes."

"Are you engaged to Mr. Maybrick?"

"I am, Mr. Carter, though the engagement has not been announced," said Harriet. "I have been in mourning for a year, you know, discarding it only a week ago."

"I understand," said Nick.

"I have been very careful during my period of mourning that nothing should be said about my engagement, and I know that Mr. Maybrick has not disclosed it by so much as a hint. He is absolutely reliable."

"No doubt."

"The truth is suspected, nevertheless, and bitterly resented."

"Resented by whom?"

"By a woman with whom Mr. Maybrick was on terms of friendly intimacy before falling in love with me," said Miss Farley, coloring again. "He assures me that their friendship was entirely proper, which I fully believe, but the woman evidently intends to take advantage of it, and make trouble for him. She has threatened him with a lawsuit, to say nothing of other vengeful proceedings, unless he ends his relations with me and consents to marry her."

"Who informed you of her feelings and intentions?" Nick inquired.

"Mr. Maybrick."

"How does he regard her threats?"

"He has ignored them, Mr. Carter, and very properly, too," said Miss Farley. "He knows that she has been stealthily watching him, nevertheless, spying by night near the rectory, though with what design he cannot conjecture."

"How long has this been going on?"

"For more than a week, evidently, culminating in what occurred last night."

"What was that?"

"Would to Heaven I could tell you," Miss Farley fervently exclaimed. "Don't ask me, Mr. Carter. That is what I want you to find out—and what has become of him."

"You mean—— Stop a moment!" Nick abruptly digressed. "Who is this jealous woman, who evidently feels that she has been wronged by Mr. Maybrick?"

"Her name is Kate Crandall."

"A resident in your town?"

"Yes."

"What do you know about her? Is she young and attractive, of good character and habits, or——"

Miss Farley checked him with a gesture.

"I know nothing about her morals," she replied. "She is quite a handsome woman, about thirty years old. She is not a person of means. She is in business as a public stenographer, and has been frequently employed by the day in that capacity by Mr. Maybrick. She took his sermons in shorthand, and prepared a typewritten copy for him. She has been accustomed to doing that work at the rectory. I do not feel it necessary to look deeper into their relations, Mr. Carter, for I have absolute faith in Mr. Maybrick's honor and integrity. After what now has occurred, moreover——"

"Let's drop everything else and come to that," Nick interposed. "What can you tell me about it? You say that Mr. Maybrick was at home last evening?"

"Yes. He left the rectory about half past eight, as near as Mrs. Soule, his housekeeper, can inform me. She is the only servant employed by Mr. Maybrick, who has no near relatives. He is a man still under thirty, Mr. Carter."

"Did he leave home alone?"

"Yes."

"Without telling Mrs. Soule where he was going, or when he would return?"

"Neither," said Miss Farley. "I will state all of the known circumstances, Mr. Carter, as briefly as possible."

"Do so," said Nick.

"On Tuesday evening, night before last, a woman called at the rectory to see Mr. Maybrick," Miss Farley began. "Mrs. Soule admitted her, but she could not identify her, for the woman was closely veiled. Judging from her figure and carriage, however, she thinks it may have been Kate Crandall, but is not sure of it."

"Continue," said Nick. "I follow you."

"Mr. Maybrick received the woman in his library, closing the door, and she remained with him for nearly an hour," Miss Farley proceeded. "There would have been nothing strange in that, perhaps, but for what he did the following day, yesterday."

"What was that?"

"He drew five hundred dollars from the bank in the morning. Mrs. Soule saw the bank notes on his desk while he was at lunch. In the afternoon, Mr. Carter, he borrowed a leather suit case from a man friend living near by. He has one of his own, also, and he put both of them near the front door in the hall. Mrs. Soule saw them

there, and asked him if he was going away. He replied that he was, but that he was not going far."

"Go on," said Nick.

"When at dinner, about half past six, however, he told Mrs. Soule that she need not leave a light for him, as he might be out unusually late. He said not a word concerning his mission or designs. He left the rectory about half past eight, as I have said, taking both suit cases."

"Containing some of his garments, I suppose?"

"On the contrary, Mr. Carter, both suit cases were—empty."

"Empty!" echoed Nick, with more thoughtful gaze. "That indicates that he expected to bring back something in them?"

"Presumably."

"How do you know they were empty?"

"Mrs. Soule had occasion to move one of them just before Mr. Maybrick departed," Miss Farley explained. "She knew by its weight that it must be empty. She thought it strange that he had packed nothing in it, and she then lifted the other. That was empty, also, and Mr. Maybrick did not touch them again until he left the house."

"H'm, I see!" Nick said quietly. "Anything more?"

"Not until this morning," replied Miss Farley. "Mrs. Soule became anxious about nine o'clock, and she telephoned to me, asking me whether I knew why Mr. Maybrick was absent. I did not, of course, and, upon learning of the circumstances, I at once went to the rectory. I found Mr. Maybrick's desk open, and I ventured to search for a letter, or something that might explain his absence."

"Did you find anything?"

"Only something that greatly increased my anxiety."

"What was that?"

"An empty revolver case in one of the drawers. I knew that he had such a weapon, Mr. Carter, for he has told me so, and I now feel sure that he took the revolver with him last evening. If I am right, it admits of only one interpretation, that he apprehended danger."

"I agree with you," said Nick. "Did you find the money mentioned, the five hundred dollars?"

"I did not," Miss Farley said gravely. "It was not in his desk, nor in his bedroom. I think he took it with him, as well as the revolver, and I cannot but feel that he has met with foul play. He surely would have told Mrs. Soule if he had not intended to return before morning."

"That does appear quite probable."

"Oh, I am sure of it, Mr. Carter. It is not at all like Mr. Maybrick to have been negligent in that way."

"Have you taken any other steps in the matter?" Nick inquired.

"I telephoned to the bank to learn whether Mr. Maybrick had said why he needed so large a sum as five hundred dollars," said Miss Farley. "The teller could not inform me. Mr. Maybrick presented his check and drew the money, but he had no conversation with the teller."

"I see."

"I also communicated with the gentleman from whom he borrowed the suit case. He said that Mr. Maybrick did not inform him why he wanted it, but promised to return it this morning. That further convinces me, Mr. Carter, that he expected to return during the night."

"I agree with you again," said Nick. "Did he depart in a conveyance, or on foot?"

"On foot."

"And you know nothing more of his movements?"

"Absolutely nothing."

"How long ago were you at the rectory?"

"About an hour ago. I came directly here in my limousine."

"I will call up Mrs. Soule and you may talk with her," said Nick, turning to the telephone on his library table. "Find out whether Mr. Maybrick has returned since you left the rectory. If not, tell Mrs. Soule that you have conferred with me, and that I will call there in about an hour. Direct her to say and do nothing more until I arrive."

"I understand," Miss Farley said, complying eagerly.

"I will take one of my assistants along, also, and get you to take us out there," Nick added.

"I will gladly do so, Mr. Carter."

"Very good. You probably know Mr. Maybrick's number. Talk with Mrs. Soule as I have directed."

Miss Farley hastened to obey, quickly obtaining only negative information from the anxious housekeeper.

The Reverend Austin Maybrick had not returned.

Nick Carter rang for Joseph and sent for Patsy Garvan, his junior assistant.

Five minutes later, in company with Miss Farley and her chauffeur, they were speeding toward Westchester County and the home of the missing rector.

CHAPTER III.

UNEXPECTED CLEWS.

It was early afternoon when Nick Carter and Patsy arrived in the aristocratic suburb in which Harriet Farley dwelt, and nearly under the towering walls of St. Lawrence's Church. Nick directed the chauffeur to stop, however, nearly a hundred yards from the sacred edifice.

"You must drop us here, Miss Farley, and return home," said he. "I will take your telephone number and talk with you later."

"Why are you averse to my going with you to the rectory?" she inquired, with a look of surprise.

"Only because publicity is undesirable at present, if it can be prevented. And it may be of advantage to me if my investigations are not suspected," Nick explained. "If you were seen returning with two men after your visit this morning, curiosity might be aroused and inquiries and comments would follow."

"Very well, Mr. Carter, in that case," Miss Farley said. "But you must let me hear from you. I shall feel very anxious."

"I certainly will," Nick assured her, while he alighted with Patsy.

The limousine sped away, leaving the two detectives in a broad, beautifully shaded avenue flanked on both sides with handsome dwellings, each occupying spacious and finely kept grounds, evincing the opulence and refinement of the residents.

St. Lawrence's Church occupied a corner in the near distance. It was a handsome edifice, somewhat back from the avenue, and flanked by a quiet side street, and Nick rightly inferred that the rectory, the home of the Reverend Austin Maybrick and his elderly housekeeper, was situated back of the church, and fronted on the side street.

"We'll turn back to the corner, Patsy, and go through the side street," he remarked, after briefly viewing the surroundings. "That will, unless I am much mistaken, bring us to the rectory."

"I'm with you," said Patsy tritely. "What do you make of the case, chief? Does it look bad to you?"

"Quite so," Nick replied. "I did not increase Miss Farley's anxiety by telling her so, but I think Maybrick is in wrong, if not up against a more desperate game than he can pull out of unaided."

"It looks so, chief, for fair," said Patsy, who had been informed of Miss Farley's disclosures.

"I must find out, if possible, just what his relations with Kate Crandall have been," said Nick. "Also, just what type of woman she is, and of what she is capable."

"It's dollars to doughnuts that she figures in his mysterious absence. Miss Farley evidently is too proud to say just what she thinks of the woman. It's long odds that she's a bit fly and fancy, at least."

"Quite likely," Nick allowed. "There are some experiences, you know, that women reveal only under desperation's spur. Until driven to desperation, it is characteristic of their sex to be silent, and bitterly nurse their resentment. When self-restraint ends, however, and desperation takes the ribbons, they go completely over the traces and to any extreme."

"That's true, chief," said Patsy. "Hell, it's said, has no fury like a woman scorned. I reckon, chief, it was Kate Crandall who called on Maybrick Tuesday evening?"

"That's an open question," said Nick. "It is important that we shall find a correct answer to it. The fact that the veiled woman, whoever she was, remained alone with Maybrick in the library for an hour, indicates that they were discussing a serious matter."

"Sure thing, chief."

"Evidently, too, their interview led to his withdrawing the five hundred dollars from the bank the following morning. He may for some reason have agreed to pay her that amount. The fact that he departed with two empty suit cases, however, shows that he was expecting to receive something from her, or from persons with whom he evidently had an appointment.

"His carrying a revolver, moreover, which is quite extraordinary for a clergyman, indicates that he anticipated trouble. He may have got in much deeper than he expected."

"In over his head, chief, I'm thinking," Patsy dryly vouchsafed.

"That now appears to be about the size of it," Nick agreed.

They had rounded a corner of the side street while speaking, and then were approaching the rectory. It stood on a plot of ground between the rear of the church and an attractive estate occupied by a handsome wooden dwelling. Both were somewhat back from the street, and an iron picket fence divided the two estates.

As he was approaching the end of this fence where it met the sidewalk, Nick recalled what Harriet Farley had said about Kate Crandall playing the spy near the rectory. He paused to view the adjoining grounds. They would have offered concealment for such a spy, and Nick's impression proved profitable.

"This way, Patsy, for a moment," he said quietly.

He saw that there was no path at that point leading to the rear of the house. The close-cut greensward showed faint footprints, nevertheless, and Nick walked into the grounds some twenty yards, carefully inspecting a narrow flower bed that ran parallel to and near the fence for a considerable distance. He found, not exactly what he was seeking, but of the same character.

He discovered several footprints in the dark soil of the flower bed, at a point nearly back of the rectory and some thirty feet from it. Contrary to Nick's expectations, however, the imprints evidently had been caused by the shoes of—men.

"By Jove, this opens a new field for conjecture," said he, calling Patsy's attention to them. "We have heard nothing about male spies in this locality. Only about the Crandall woman."

"Gee! that's right, chief, but these are men's tracks," said Patsy, eagerly inspecting them.

"Undoubtedly," said Nick. "There evidently were two of them. Note the two different sizes, also that the depth of the soles is greater than the heels, and that parts of each overlap themselves, all showing plainly enough that the two men were crouching here and evidently watching something, or some one, through the picket fence."

"Sure thing. There are no prints in any other part of the flower bed."

"There certainly were two men, Patsy, one of medium build, the other quite a large man, judging from the size of their shoes," Nick went on. "Through this shrubbery in the rectory yard they could see only the rear and one side of the house, including the end of the veranda and the conservatory."

"I get you, chief," said Patsy. "Whomever they were watching must have been in that locality."

"There is nothing specially distinctive in these imprints, however, aside from suggesting the size of the men," Nick added. "We'll keep them in mind, nevertheless, while looking farther."

"Looking where, chief?"

"In the rectory grounds," said Nick. "If watching a person in the house, they would have selected a nearer point. It's a safe wager, then, that they were watching some one—outside of the rectory."

"Gee! that's right, too," said Patsy, quick to see the point. "Let's have a look."

"We'll go out and enter through the gate. We may slip a cog if we try to scale these iron pickets."

"I believe you. They're as sharp as a trooper's lance."

Nick led the way to the street and to the gate entering the rectory grounds. The housekeeper had not put in an appearance, and they proceeded around the veranda to that side of the dwelling visible from the adjoining estate. Carefully inspecting the ground in the meantime, Nick soon discovered evidence confirming his suspicions. He found as before, in fact, more evidence that he was expecting.

In some yielding earth between one side of the conservatory and the bend of the library window, a space of about eight feet, were numerous footprints obviously caused by the shoes of two women who had recently been there.

The impressions were very unlike each other. One was that of a slender shoe with a small, long heel that had sunk deep into the soft soil.

The other was larger and broader, with spreading soles and wide heels, generally known as common-sense heels.

Crouching to carefully inspect all of these impressions,

Nick made other discoveries, from which he drew several important deductions.

"By Jove, this is still more curious," he remarked, after a moment.

"What's that, chief?" questioned Patsy, bending nearer.

"Two women have recently been here, instead of only one. The location of some of the tracks indicate that they came to spy through the library window and play the eavesdropper. It must have been in the evening, therefore, for they would have been seen in daylight."

"Surely."

"Here are several bruised blades of grass broken off by them and trodden into the soil," Nick added, picking up a couple of them. "They are too dry and wilted for it to have occurred as recently as last evening, yet they are fresh and green enough to show that it could not have been much longer ago. We can safely say night before last."

"The evening when the veiled woman visited Maybrick."

"Exactly."

"Gee! you must be right, chief, though it's fine figuring."

"Here's another curious point, Patsy."

"Namely?"

"The two women, if their shoes have any significance, were of a decidedly opposite class," said Nick. One wore a narrow, high-heeled shoe, denoting a woman of fashion and means. The heels of the other were broad, both badly worn, and there was a patch on one of the soles. The patch has left its mark in some of these imprints, and the run-down condition of both heels appears in the indentations left by them."

"I see," said Patsy. "It's as plain as twice two."

"This woman must be of an opposite class, then, from the other. She wears patched shoes, with the heels half gone, indicating that she cannot afford new ones."

"That's a sane-and-safe deduction, chief, surely."

"Here is evidence warranting still another."

"How so?"

"Note that all the imprints of the high-heeled shoes overlap and partly obliterate those of the cheaper ones," Nick pointed out. "Plainly, then, the wearer of the former was here later than the other. They were not here together, moreover, or their tracks would not be so intermingled."

"I see the point, chief."

"As near as I now can size it up, the poorer-clad woman, if her garments corresponded with her shoes, arrived here before the other, and she may have been the veiled woman who talked with Maybrick. The other may have seen her, or suspected that she was in the library with Maybrick, and she may have come here to watch them and overhear what passed between them."

"And the two men beyond the picket fence may have been watching both."

"I think so."

"Gee whiz!" Patsy said perplexedly. "All this increases the mix-up, chief, for fair."

"Decidedly," Nick agreed.

"Why were two men and two women here? Can one of them have been the Crandall woman?"

"I'm going to find out a little later," said Nick, a bit grimly. "We first will have a talk with Mrs. Soule, however, and see what we can discover in the house. Miss Farley, though a bright and brainy girl, may have overlooked something."

Nick led the way to the rectory door and rang the bell. He was admitted by Mrs. Soule, to whom he introduced Patsy and himself, and whom he found to be an elderly, gracious woman of sixty, burdened with anxiety concerning the missing rector and eager to do all in her power to aid the detectives.

But she could add nothing to what she already had told Harriet Farley, as imparted to Nick, nor give the latter the slightest clew to the mystery. She could describe the rector's veiled visitor only as a woman of about Kate Crandall's height and figure, and had not observed whether she was well or rather poorly clad. She stated that the woman had merely asked whether Mr. Maybrick was at home and would see a lady for a short time, and that the rector had received her in his library.

"Are you sure that she spoke of herself as a lady?" Nick inquired. "She did not say woman, did she?"

"No, sir," Mrs. Soule insisted. "I am positive that lady is the word she used."

It was significant only in that Nick aimed to definitely learn, if possible, which of the two women suspected of having been spying outside had had an interview with Maybrick, if either of the two.

A search in the rector's desk, moreover, brought to light nothing explaining his absence, other than the revolver case mentioned by Miss Farley.

A crayon portrait on an easel, however, showed Maybrick to be a splendidly built, striking type of man, with a strong, smoothly shaved face, a classic cast of features, and obviously a man of sterling character and extraordinary mental vigor.

Nick lingered only to direct Mrs. Soule to do nothing about the matter, but to answer inquiries by stating that Mr. Maybrick was away for a few days, and the two detectives then departed.

There was a look of increasing determination on Nick's strong, clean-cut face, however, when they walked away and rounded a corner of St. Lawrence's Church.

"I'm going to find that woman, Patsy, or lose a leg in the attempt," he said bluntly.

"I'm with you, chief," Patsy quickly declared.

"We'll begin with getting Kate Crandall's measure," Nick added. "Miss Farley told me that she has an office in the business section. I will pay her a visit and see how she lines up."

"Am I to go with you?"

"You are to remain outside," said Nick. "I may decide not to expose my hand, which would be to our disadvantage if she really is responsible for Maybrick's absence."

"That's right, too."

"It may be necessary to shadow her, moreover, so you had better stick round outside and await my instructions. There will be something doing, I think, after I have interviewed this woman."

CHAPTER IV.

NICK CARTER'S RUSE.

Two o'clock found Nick Carter at the door of an office on the second floor of the local bank building. He was reading the tenant's sign on a polished brass plate: "Kate Crandall. Public Stenographer."

Nick listened briefly, hearing nothing from within, and he then opened the door and entered.

The office was attractively furnished. A costly Persian rug covered the floor. Against one of the walls stood an expensive roll-top desk. On a stand near by were two typewriters. On a table in the middle of the office, covered with books and magazines, was a huge cut-glass jar, literally overflowing with magnificent roses.

Nick instantly noticed these costly furnishings, which were much too expensive for one who works for a living, and he drew a correct conclusion—that Kate Crandall had wealthy admirers, and that she had no scruples over accepting valuable tokens of their affection.

She was seated in an armchair near one of the lace-draped windows, absorbed in a magazine story when the detective entered.

She was a pronounced brunette, strikingly handsome, with regular features, a rich velvety complexion, languorous dark eyes, and full red lips, a face evincing a sensuous nature and a fiery temper. Her fine figure was a bit showily clad. Several costly diamonds adorned her shapely hands. One high-heeled French shoe and a bit of silk hosiery protruded from below her stylish blue skirt.

"Fly and fancy is right," thought Nick, recalling Patsy's prediction.

Looking up when he entered, Kate Crandall received him with a smile and laid aside her magazine.

"Good afternoon, sir," she said, greeting him agreeably. "Take a seat."

"You are Miss Crandall?" returned Nick inquiringly.

"Yes, sir," said Kate, bowing.

"My name is Henderson," said Nick, taking a chair. "Do I find you busy just now?"

"No, indeed, not at present. What can I do for you?"

"Not very much just now, Miss Crandall, but considerable later, providing your terms are satisfactory and my work agreeable to you," Nick said suavely.

"I work entirely on a space basis."

"That will suit me."

"What is the character of the work, Mr. Henderson?"

"I am a writer of photo dramas for a leading New York moving-picture concern," Nick glibly informed her. "I have a long contract with the firm and require the help of a competent stenographer to prepare my scenarios. The work is not difficult and will pay you well."

"I will undertake it," said Kate, nodding her finely poised head. "I can discontinue it if found distasteful."

"Certainly."

"When will you want me to begin?"

"Probably on Monday, when I will show you how I wish the work done and discuss other details with you."

"That will be agreeable to me, Mr. Henderson," said Kate unsuspiciously.

Nick had detected, up to that time, nothing beyond the points mentioned, but he had hit upon a ruse for evoking a self-betrayal from the woman, as may be inferred from his artful pretensions.

"I will see you here Monday morning, then," said he, apparently about to go. But he immediately added, as if hit with an idea: "Before leaving, by the way, I will employ you to write a letter for me to my firm, whom I wish to inform of my intentions. Will you take it in shorthand, or——"

"I will typewrite it from your dictation," Miss Crandall interposed, taking a seat at one of the typewriters and deftly adjusting a sheet of blank paper. "Shall I date it from here, Mr. Henderson?"

"If you please," said Nick.

Click—click—click—click!

Miss Crandall's tapering fingers moved swiftly over the keys. Nick saw at a glance that she was an expert. He moved his chair near the end of the table, to a position enabling him to watch her face.

"All ready, Mr. Henderson."

She glanced at him and smiled a bit oddly.

Nick began to dictate:

"Klein & Coster, Eccles Building, New York."

Click—click—click—clickerty—click!

"Dear sirs."

Click—click—clickerty—click—click!

Nick continued, amid continuing clicking:

"I have to-day made arrangements with a competent stenographer and will set to work upon the series of dramas we were discussing yesterday. You may expect a scenario of the first one early next week. I think you will prefer for a starter the sensational detective drama I mentioned to you, featuring the peerless American sleuth, Nick Carter. The story of the drama relates to the mysterious disappearance of a parish priest, who, in spite of his religious vows, falls desperately in love with a very wealthy and beautiful girl, who——"

The clicking suddenly stopped.

Kate Crandall's deft hands had gone wrong. She had struck several wrong keys. She reached for an eraser, saying quickly:

"One moment, please."

Nick saw that she was turning pale. Her arching dark brows had knit perceptibly.

"Certainly," he said suavely.

Kate erased the misprinted letters and readjusted the traveler. She then gazed steadily at the detective for a moment, as if fain to read his mind, and she then said tersely:

"Continue."

Nick went on without a change of countenance, quite as if there had been no interruption.

"The wealthy and beautiful girl, deeply in love with the parish priest, permits him to renounce his vows and pledges her hand to him in marriage."

Click—click—clickerty—click!

The shapely, swiftly moving hands of the stenographer were unsteady, were trembling visibly.

"It appears, however, that another woman suspects the intentions of the parish priest, a woman involved with him in a way ultimately revealed in the drama, and she subjects him to a secret espionage, which leads to a crime——"

The clicking stopped short again.

A crimson flood imbued Kate Crandall's cheeks for a moment, then faded quickly, leaving her ghastly pale. She steadied herself with an effort. She reached up and removed the sheet of paper from the typewriter, tearing it quickly and tossing it into a wastebasket.

"Excuse me!" she said curtly, her dark eyes turning upon Nick with a fiery glance. "I have decided, Mr.

Henderson, that I will not take your work. Do not call here again, sir. Good day."

She arose while speaking, then turned quickly and gazed from the window.

"Dear me!" Nick exclaimed, with affected astonishment. "Why so, Miss Crandall? What is the meaning of this sudden change of mind?"

"I do not care to make any explanation," she said sharply. "Attribute it to a whim, to caprice, or anything else that suits you."

"But you must have a reason, some cause for——"

"The work would be distasteful," snapped Kate, wheeling sharply around and facing him. "I shall not discuss the matter. That settles it."

"On the contrary, Miss Crandall, it does nothing of the kind," Nick now said, quite sternly. "This matter will be settled only when it is settled right. I know, without your informing me, the cause of the attitude you now have taken."

"And I know without your informing me, sir, that you are not what you pretend you are," Kate angrily retorted. "You are here with covert designs. I have nothing more to say to you. Leave my office."

"Not until you have told me what you know about the disappearance of the Reverend Austin Maybrick," Nick sternly rejoined.

"Disappearance of Mr. Maybrick?"

"That's what I said."

"He has disappeared, then?"

"You know that he has and that——"

The woman interrupted him with a derisive laugh.

"I know nothing of the kind," she said curtly. "I neither know nor care anything about it. I——"

"You know, at least, what occurred in the rectory last evening," Nick sharply interrupted. "You were spying outside of the library window at the time. You know——"

"See here, Mr. Whatever-your-name-may-be!" Kate cut in defiantly. "Anything that I know I shall keep to myself. You are a detective—that's what you are. But I'll put you wise to one thing right off the reel. You haven't got anything on me, nor can you get anything. You cannot persuade, frighten, nor intimidate me. I will tell you nothing, absolutely nothing, and you may go to thunder. Get out of my office, now, or I will call a policeman and have you ejected. That's all. I'm done with you."

Nick came to a quick decision. He saw plainly that the woman meant what she said and could not be turned then and there. He abruptly changed his course.

"Very well," he replied. "It will not be necessary to call a policeman."

Nick turned with the last and departed. He had directed Patsy to wait in a doorway on the opposite side of the street, in case he might want to signal him from Kate Crandall's window.

Nick reasoned that she might watch from the window, and see him if he rejoined his waiting assistant.

He wrote a few lines in his notebook while descending the stairs, then tore out the leaf and folded it. As he walked briskly up the street a moment later, he caught Patsy's eye and dropped the wad of paper on the sidewalk.

"Gee! there's something doing," thought Patsy. "He don't want to be seen again with me. He has dropped me written instructions."

Sauntering across the street, Patsy picked up the paper and read what Nick had written:

"Kate Crandall knows, but will not speak. Shadow her constantly until otherwise directed. Be governed by circumstances. I'm off for home. Phone me there of any discoveries."

CHAPTER V.

PATSY TURNS CROOK.

Patsy Garvan needed no instructions beyond those contained in Nick Carter's note, nor additional information as to the position Kate Crandall had taken. It was plain enough to Patsy, and he shaped his course accordingly.

Knowing that the woman might incidentally have seen him from her window, and that she would recall him suspiciously if they met later, Patsy entered the corridor of a near building and put on a disguise with which he was provided. It by no means improved him, however, for it gave him a decidedly tough and hangdog appearance.

"It's good enough for the work to be done," he tersely soliloquized, not anticipating how effectively it was to serve him.

Returning to the street, Patsy found a concealment from which he could stealthily watch the door of the bank building, prepared to await the departure of Kate Crandall or size up any visitor she might receive. His vigil was not rewarded until five o'clock, when Kate came out and walked quickly up the street.

"Gee! she's a peach, all right," thought Patsy sententiously, who until then had had merely a glimpse at her through her office window. "She evidently has quit work for the day and is heading for home."

Patsy was right. He also inferred from the woman's darkly handsome face that she was not in an enviable frame of mind. He stealthily followed her out of the business district and to an attractive outskirt of the town. There, just as she was turning a corner, a well-dressed man stepped from a near yard and spoke to her.

Patsy saw her draw back, as if confronted by a stranger, and then he saw the man's face, and recognized him.

"Holy smoke!" he muttered, slinking back of a tree. "This does settle it. That's Turk Magill, gangster and all-around bad egg, as sure as I'm a foot high. She just about employed him to get the gospel dispenser and—no, by Jove, she don't appear to know him. I must be wrong."

Cautiously watching them, Patsy presently decided that he was right, and that Kate Crandall was not acquainted with Turk Magill. She remained talking with him, nevertheless, frowning darkly while listening to his earnest utterances, yet occasionally glancing apprehensively toward a house around the corner.

"Gee! he's got something on her," thought Patsy, after a few moments. "That's dead open and shut, or she wouldn't listen to him. She's doing so under protest; that's a cinch."

Magill was a well-built, florid man, a thousand times more prepossessing externally than within, and Patsy

quickly saw that the rascal's arguments, persuasion, or of whatever his talk consisted, would not immediately prove effective.

He saw, too, that he could not directly approach the couple without incurring suspicion, but that he might hasten around the square and approach them through the other street, possibly getting a line on their talk by passing near them.

"It's worth trying," he said to himself. "The woman, at least, cannot give me the slip."

Patsy did not defer this move. Sheltered by the tree then hiding him, he retraced his steps and darted through a near street, presently rounding the square and sauntering toward the couple from the other direction. While he still was some fifty yards away, however, Kate Crandall abruptly left Magill and hastened to the dwelling at which she had repeatedly glanced.

Patsy rightly inferred that it was where she boarded. He passed her just as she was entering the gate, noting that she looked pale and disturbed, and had an ugly gleam in her black eyes.

Patsy also saw that Magill was watching her from around the corner, and knowing the utterly depraved and desperate character of the crook, he instantly adopted a ruse that he thought might prove profitable and enable him to get a line on the game Magill was playing.

Though he heard Kate enter the house and close the door, Patsy repeatedly glanced back over his shoulder, as if hard hit with her flashy style and personal beauty.

Upon turning the corner and coming face to face with Magill, however, Patsy pretended to see him for the first time, and to realize that his own covert admiration of the woman had been detected. He grinned, remarking rudely, as if by way of explanation:

"Don't often see one like her. Lucky for me she went under cover, or I'd have got a crook in my neck looking backward."

Magill looked at him sharply. It was then that Patsy's hangdog disguise proved advantageous. Magill saw that he was not going to stop, or so it appeared, and he said quickly:

"Wait a bit!"

"Wait for what?" questioned Patsy, pausing.

Magill eyed him searchingly for several seconds.

"You'd wait for the skirt, wouldn't you?" he asked, with unmistakable significance.

Patsy grinned again expressively.

"Rather!" said he. "I'd wait for her till I hadn't a leg to stand on."

"You might do worse, pal," said Magill suggestively.

"You mean I couldn't do better," returned Patsy. "But I'm not in the class with swell skirts like her."

"She's not so swell."

"Isn't she?"

Patsy looked surprised and his eyes took on a light well in keeping with his disguised countenance. He now shrewdly surmised that Magill had a use for him, that he had designs that he could not carry out alone, and that he needed a confederate. This suited Patsy to the letter. He added incredulously, nevertheless, lest his inference and readiness might be suspected:

"That don't go down. There's nothing in it—nothing for me."

"Think not?"

"That's what."

"I can put you in a way to become friendly with her," said Magill, with squinting scrutiny.

"You can?" Patsy demanded.

"Surest thing you know. But you'd have to take chances," Magill pointedly added.

"Chances, eh? Chances cut no ice with me. I'd take the longest ever."

"Is that right?" asked Magill, smiling.

"Try me and see," said Patsy; then abruptly: "Say, what's your game? You ain't stringing me along in this fashion for nothing."

"I'm trying to get your measure," Magill frankly admitted.

"Is that so?" Patsy spoke with affected resentment. "What do you want of it? How do you like it, as far as you've got?"

"You look all right," Magill vouchsafed dryly.

"Well, I ain't dolled up for anything," Patsy bluntly asserted. "I'm just as you see me, all on the surface. Take it or leave it. It's up to you."

Magill was favorably impressed, and he waxed confidential.

"See here, pal, what's your name?" he inquired.

"Jack Dolan," said Patsy readily.

"Do you hang out around here?"

"Not so far away I can't hoof it."

"What's your business?"

"Chauffeur—when I'm in on a job," said Patsy, at random, but he again shot luckily. "I'm looking for one just now, but not looking too hard."

"Would you take a mighty soft one?" Magill questioned.

"Would a duck swim?"

"And take chances?"

"Any you'll take," said Patsy. "You can gamble on that."

"If I can gamble safely on it," Magill replied, "I can put you on easy street, and do it without much risk."

"You can, eh?"

"Believe me—I can!"

"Say, you cut loose, then," said Patsy, drawing nearer. "You don't need to beat around any more bushes. I'll go up against anything for coin, if there's enough of it, or for that skirt. You start right in with the bridle off and hand out your dye stuff. You'll find me game, all right."

Magill really thought so, now, so well had Patsy played his part. He laid his finger on Patsy's arm, saying more impressively:

"Listen to me, Dolan. If you mean all you say, I can put you in right to share in a barrel of money. It's not a case of crack a bank or pull off any kind of a dangerous job. The coin is where it can be easily got—barring one thing."

"What's that?"

"Forcing a certain party to say where it's hidden."

"The coin?"

"Yes."

"Who hid it?"

"Never mind who hid it, Dolan," Magill objected. "Don't you get too inquisitive. The party who hid it had no legitimate claim on it. He stole it. Furthermore, he's dead. There will never be a kick from him. All we need do in order to get it is to force a certain party to squeal."

"How much coin is there?" asked Patsy, displaying a steadily increasing interest.

"A quarter million."

"Come again! Say that just once more."

"A quarter million."

"I reckoned I must have misunderstood. Say, you ain't nutty, are you?" questioned Patsy, with a suspicious growl. "Your dome ain't cracked, is it?"

"Not a crack in it," Magill earnestly assured him. "I'm handing you straight goods. There's a quarter million that may be had for—well, Dolan, for a mere bit of chesty work. You wouldn't get in on it, mind you, only I cannot get word to pals of mine in time to use them. I want a little help."

"For what?"

"To take that skirt where she can be properly questioned," Magill said pointedly.

"Take her where?"

"To a house about three miles from here."

"What's the matter with a hack or a buzz wagon?"

"Either would fill the bill," said Magill. "There is only one difficulty."

"What's that?"

"The skirt says she won't go," Magill explained suggestively.

"Oh, ho; I see!" said Patsy, with eyes dilating. "You want to force her to go?"

"That calls the turn," answered Magill. "She has agreed to meet me at the end of this street just before dark to finish the spiel I was having with her. She wouldn't end it here for fear she'd be seen from the house where she boards."

"I get you."

"There are only a few scattered houses at the end of the street, and that's the direction I want to take her," Magill added. "Now, if you're not a bird head, you can see how easy it can be done."

"You mean to kidnap her?" said Patsy quickly.

"That's the game."

"And you want me to help?"

"If you've got the nerve."

"I've got nerve enough, all right," declared Patsy. "But what do I get for this job?"

"Enough money to buy a corner lot on Broadway," Magill forcibly assured him. "That's all I want of you, too, and it's all the risk you have to take."

"When do I get the coin, and how much?"

"Ten thousand bucks, possibly more, within twenty-four hours."

"After nailing the skirt?"

"Exactly."

"I'm hooked," said Patsy, as if abruptly deciding to accept the offer. "Spiel off what you want done and I'll do it."

"Shake!" said Magill, extending his hand. "I thought I read your mug correctly. My name is Mike Magill, sometimes called Turk Magill, and you'll find me all right and always on the level."

"If that goes, Mr. Magill, I'm your meat for any kind of a job," said Patsy. "A quarter million, eh? Say, I'm afraid I'll wake up. Hang it, I'd wade through blood for that. What am I to do?"

"We'll need a touring car," said Magill.

"I know a garage where I can swipe one."

"Swiping it might make trouble for us. Could you hire it?"

"Sure—if I had the price," said Patsy.

"Here's a twenty-dollar note. Will that be enough?"

"More than enough."

"Take it, then," said Magill. "It shows you, too, that I mean business."

"I'm wise to that, all right."

"Do your part, Dolan, and you'll get a hundred bucks for every dime in that twenty," Magill added impressively.

"You leave it to me," Patsy rejoined. "That skirt is as good as on her way."

CHAPTER VI.

THE MAN WHO DIED.

It was early evening when Nick Carter arrived home after his interview with Kate Crandall. He found Chick awaiting him. On the office table lay a small plaster cast, not there when Nick departed with Harriet Farley that morning, concerning whose mission and what since had occurred, Chick was, of course, entirely ignorant.

"Well, by Jove, you've had a long outing," he remarked, when Nick entered and removed his coat and hat. "Have you been equally busy?"

"You know me," replied Nick pointedly.

"None better. What's doing?"

"A case for the young lady who prevented me from going with Mallory this morning."

"Who is she?"

"Her name is Harriet Farley. She is the only child of the late Archibald Farley. She is worth four or five millions—and then some."

"That ought to keep the wolf from the door, at least," said Chick, smiling. "What's the case?"

Nick briefly informed him, covering all of the essential points and immediately adding:

"Have you heard from Patsy?"

"Not a word."

"There must be something doing, then, or he would have found time to telephone a message of some kind. How long have you been here? What's this?"

Nick had caught sight of the plaster cast on the table. He took it up and examined it.

"One result of my trip with Mallory," said Chick. "It's mighty strange, Nick, how circumstances sometimes dovetail together in this big and busy world."

"What do you mean?"

"You have not forgotten Mallory's letter about a dead man up in Harlem?"

"Certainly not."

"We went up there," Chick said, more earnestly. "The address proved to be a miserable house in one of the outskirts. It appeared to be unoccupied, so we forced an entrance, though very little force was necessary, as far as that goes."

"You found?"

"A miserably furnished place, Nick, with indications of poverty on all sides. There was evidence that a man and woman have been living there, and so some of the neighbors informed us; but the woman has removed all of her belongings and left only the body of the man. We found the body in a dismal back room on the second floor. He has been dead about two days."

"Murdered?"

"Not exactly."

"What do you mean by not exactly?"

"Violence, but not murder," said Chick. "The cause of his death was obvious. It resulted from a bullet wound in his left shoulder. It had not been properly treated. Blood poison had ensued and sent him over the dark river."

"H'm, that's strange!" Nick remarked. "There must be something back of it. Could you identify him?"

"Easily."

"Who?"

"The very man, Nick, of whom we were talking with Mallory when Vallon arrived with that letter—Jim Nordeck, the yegg cracksman, the crook suspected of having been one of the gang that robbed that Westchester savings bank."

"The devil you say!"

"There was nothing to it," Chick added. "There was no mistaking him."

"You probably are right," Nick replied, with a nod. "One of the gang is known to have been wounded during their hurried get-away."

"The man was Nordeck."

"Undoubtedly."

"That occurred a week ago," Chick went on. "He evidently has been lying ill and in a bad way since then. There was convincing evidence of that. Furthermore, according to the neighbors we questioned, no physician was called and nothing definite is known about the couple. They have occupied the house nearly a month. They probably did not dare to call a physician, lest the wound might lead to an exposure of Nordeck's identity and his part in the Westchester burglary."

"That undoubtedly explains it," Nick agreed. "Nordeck took a chance of recovery without the help of a surgeon. His negligence proved fatal. The writer of the letter must have been his daughter, Nancy Nordeck, whom I saw on a Harlem train a month ago."

"That's right, too," Chick said. "The woman seen by the neighbors answers Nancy Nordeck's description. She took care of her father till he died. Then she bolted, sending Chief Mallory that letter and a fifty-dollar bank note for funeral expenses."

"It shows plainly enough that I was right."

"In attributing the burglary to a gang including Nordeck?"

"Exactly. That bank note was part of the plunder," said Nick. "Nordeck evidently got his share of it. He must have been dead broke before the burglary, however, or he would not have been living in such quarters as you describe. You searched the house, of course."

"Every nook and corner."

"What did you find?"

"Only what I have stated. There was nothing to show where Nancy Nordeck has gone, nor any trace of the stolen money. She bolted with that, all right, or as much of it as Nordeck derived from the job. Mallory took charge of the body and will have it decently buried."

"If we are to judge from the sentiment expressed in her letter to Mallory, the better part of the girl must have been deeply stirred by the death of her father," Nick observed. "She wanted him to have a cloth-covered casket with silver grips, you remember, also a prayer said for him."

"She is not entirely bad, then, after all."

"His death may have hit her hard, Chick, and possibly will reform her. Let's hope so for her own sake. Where did you get this cast?"

"From one of the footprints in the back yard," said Chick. "I thought it might be needed later, perhaps, and so I sent Danny after some plaster and made a cast of the footprint. It was Nancy Nordeck's, all right, for no other woman has recently been in the yard. She was——"

"Stop a moment," Nick interrupted. "By Jove, Chick, you are right. Circumstances do dovetail strangely sometimes."

"You mean——"

"This is a facsimile of one of the imprints I found under Maybrick's library window."

"Are you sure?"

"Positively. Here is the run-down heel, the mark of a patch on the sole, and the size is exactly the same."

"Great guns! that seems almost incredible," said Chick, with a puzzled expression. "It cannot be that Nancy Nordeck was one of the women you suspected of having been watching Maybrick."

"On the contrary, Chick, she certainly was," Nick insisted.

"But what motive could she have had? A clergyman is about the last man on earth in whom Nancy Nordeck would have any interest. Her whole career has been a vicious one."

"True."

"It must be that you are mistaken, then, and that the shoe of some other woman corresponds exactly with hers."

"Wait a bit!" said Nick. "Let me consider all of the circumstances. I know I am not mistaken. Be quiet while I stir up my gray matter and dig out the solution of this problem."

Nick was not long in finding it, or in framing up a theory that seemed consistent, at least, with all of the known circumstances. His thoughtful face suddenly lighted. He straightened up and exclaimed, gazing again at Chick:

"By Jove, I think I have it."

"The answer?"

"Yes."

"Good!"

"If I am right, however, the outlook is bad—deucedly bad at that."

"Bad for whom?"

"For the rector, Maybrick—and for Nancy Nordeck herself."

"Why bad for her?" questioned Chick perplexedly. "I don't get you. What do you make of it?"

"Listen." Nick drew forward in his chair. "As sure as you're a foot high, the veiled woman who visited Maybrick on Tuesday evening was Nancy Nordeck. Her inferior attire, the likeness of this plaster cast to the footprint under the library window, together with all of the other circumstances, convince me that she was the woman."

"But why, if she went there to visit him, did she look through the library window?"

"To learn whether he was at home and alone. That would have been a perfectly natural step for her to have taken."

"True, Nick, as far as that goes," Chick allowed. "But why on earth did she visit Maybrick? What business can a crook of her class have had with a clergyman?"

"That is suggested, at least, in the letter she sent to Mallory."

"You mean?"

"The sentiment I detected between the lines," said Nick. "That girl, Chick, for she's little more than a girl, was so deeply affected by the death of her father that she resolved to reform. There's nothing else to it. She went to Maybrick and told him about the burglary, and she offered to turn over the plunder to him that he might restore it to the bank officials."

"Oh, hold on!" Chick exclaimed incredulously. "You are overlooking no end of contradictory points. How, to begin with, did Nancy Nordeck come in possession of the plunder?"

"That is easily explained," Nick replied. "We know that Jim Nordeck has been repeatedly buncoed and cheated by his pals, and he may in this case have insisted upon taking charge of the plunder until it could have been equally divided. The gang would have consented to that, of course, for they could not have cracked the vault without his assistance. He was the big squeeze in that part of the work."

"That's very true," Chick allowed.

"If I am right, then, Nordeck took it to the house in which he died, or hid it somewhere else, perhaps, expecting to recover from his wound and soon whack up with his confederates, who, evidently, were not living with him and Nancy in the Harlem house."

"Surely not, Nick, or they would have been seen by the neighbors."

"Instead, however, Nordeck died, and the girl experienced a change of heart. I now feel dead sure of that, Chick, and it's not the first time that death has brought about such a reformation."

"But why did she not, in that case, take the plunder directly to the bank officials, or turn it over to the police?"

"For two reasons, perhaps," Nick pointed out. "She may have feared arrest, or knew that she would be watched and would be prevented by other members of the gang."

"Possibly."

"The fact that they did not go to the Harlem house and force her to give up the plunder, moreover, convinces me that Nordeck had hidden it somewhere, and, that after his death, Nancy alone knew where it could be found."

"I see."

"She did not dare to go and remove it, however, lest she should be seen and waylaid by the gang. She went to Maybrick, therefore, and told him all of the circumstances. It would have been perfectly natural for her to select him, for his charitable work among the criminal classes is widely known, and she would have felt sure that she could rely upon him."

"That goes without saying," said Chick.

"This theory is further confirmed by the fact that Maybrick left home the following night with two empty suit cases," Nick argued.

"In which to bring home the plunder?"

"Exactly."

"But why did he draw five hundred dollars from the bank?"

"H'm, let's see," Nick said thoughtfully. "It's obvious that Nancy Nordeck is nearly penniless, aside from the bank funds. She may have refused to take any more of the stolen money, yet may have insisted upon having funds with which to leave the country. She is wanted for several petty crimes, you know."

"True."

"Maybrick must have drawn his own money to give her, knowing he would afterward be reimbursed by the bank officials. There is a reward of ten thousand dollars for the recovery of the funds."

"The girl could have got that," said Chick.

"If she has had the turn of heart that the circumstances lead me to suspect, she would not accept the reward," Nick replied. "That is a woman's way of doing things."

"I begin to think you are right Nick, after all."

"I feel pretty sure of it."

"But how do you account for Maybrick's absence and his——"

"That's the worst feature of the case," Nick put in.

"You mean?"

"That he's in bad, most likely, as well as Nancy Nordeck."

"I don't quite get you."

"Suppose I am right," said Nick. "Suppose this theory is correct. It's a copper-riveted cinch, Chick, in that case, that the gang that committed the burglary has been stealthily watching Nancy Nordeck and——"

"By thunder, I see the point!" cried Chick, more gravely. "You think they have got both her and Maybrick, and also have landed the plunder."

"It certainly looks so. Furthermore—wait! There's my telephone bell. We may hear from Patsy."

Nick turned quickly to his desk and took up the instrument.

"Hello!" he said quietly.

No answer.

He called again a bit louder:

"Hello! hello!"

Still no answer.

Nick's brow clouded.

Then, suddenly, there fell upon his listening ears a quick, intermittent tapping. He listened even more intently. His countenance lighted, then clouded again, darker than before. He seized a pad of paper and a pencil and began to write, listening all the while.

Three minutes passed and Nick then hung up the receiver and sprang to his feet.

"Bring Danny and the car as quickly as possible," he cried. "We've got to make a record run, if ever we made one. Guns on your hips, Chick. Patsy in the hands of the gang."

CHAPTER VII.

TAKING LONG CHANCES.

Patsy Garvan and Turk Magill, after arriving at a very lucid understanding concerning Kate Crandall, speedily decided how their felonious design could best be executed. Patsy entered into it, moreover, with a zest that further assured Magill of his sincerity, of which he had scarce a shadow of doubt when they parted to begin operations.

Leaving Magill to keep his appointment with Kate,

Patsy hastened to a public garage that he had seen while shadowing her from her office. Luckily, too, he immediately found the proprietor, to whom he quickly introduced himself and confided the situation.

Patsy found in him a willing assistant, too, who provided him with a touring car, but flatly refused to accept any payment.

"I'll not even think of it," he protested, when Patsy tried to force Magill's twenty-dollar bank note upon him. "Pastor Maybrick is a friend of mine, and he's one man in a million. Nick Carter is one in ten millions, moreover, and it's a pleasure to serve both of them. You take the car, Mr. Garvan, and return it when convenient. It's yours for the asking. I'd like to do more, and I wish you good luck."

Patsy thanked him heartily and guided the car from the garage within twenty minutes after parting from Magill. He knew that he was playing a hazardous game and taking long chances, that he was going up against as dangerous and desperate a man as ever stood in leather, as well as crooks of like character, and that a slip of the tongue, or even the ghost of a mishap, might at any moment expose his subterfuge and put him in peril of his life.

It was not in Patsy's nature to shrink from the undertaking on that account, however, and he hardly gave it a thought. He felt that the game was worth the candle, and he was ready to burn the candle at both ends.

Daylight was turning to the dusk of early evening when he left the garage. It was just about the time when Kate Crandall had promised to meet Magill, and Patsy at once headed for the point agreed upon. He discovered them when he entered the long street leading out of the town, moreover, and he slowed down to approach them moderately.

Magill saw him coming. Increasing confidence in him mingled with his feeling of grim satisfaction. He was talking earnestly with the woman, then in a locality where there were only a few scattered dwellings; but he had relieved her of any misgivings by turning back with her toward the town, though, in reality, only to see and make ready for Patsy when he approached. He reached into his pocket and grasped a large silk handkerchief with which he was provided.

Half a minute later brought Patsy within thirty yards of the couple. He then swerved toward them, bringing the car to a stop near the curbing.

"Beg pardon, sir," said he, leaning out, and, at the same time, deftly unlocking the door of the tonneau. "Will this road take me to Bronxville?"

Kate Crandall paused.

Magill shook his head and stepped back of her as if to point the way for his questioner.

"No, not straight ahead," he replied, with a significant wink. "You must take the first crossroad."

"To the left, or right?"

"To the left, and—now, Dolan, get her!"

Magill had clapped the silk handkerchief over Kate's mouth, and, as quick as a flash, was tying it back of her head.

Patsy, equally quick, leaped from the car and seized her arms, forcing them behind her and crying hurriedly:

"Tie her wrists, Magill, with another handkerchief. I've got her. She can't yip. Her struggles cut no ice. Into the car with her, now, and the trick is turned."

In spite of her frantic efforts to escape, it was a comparatively easy task for two strong and determined men to quickly overcome the frightened woman, who was hurriedly forced into the tonneau even while Patsy was speaking. She then sank, half fainting, in one corner, unable to make any outcry and hardly able to move.

Magill banged the door and sat down beside her, crying sternly:

"You'll not be hurt, woman, if you keep still and do what you're told. Now, Dolan, away with you. Follow this road for half a mile, then take the left fork. I'll direct you later. You're all right from your toes up, pal, and you'll get the coin I promised you. Let her go lively."

The last was entirely unnecessary. The speedometer already was showing forty miles, and the last of the scattered dwellings were quickly left behind.

The dusty road swept like a gray ribbon under the swiftly moving car, the skillful driving of which Magill was quick to see and appreciate, while Patsy was inwardly congratulating himself upon having informed the rascal that his vocation was that of a chauffeur.

Under Magill's repeated assurances that she was in no personal danger, Kate Crandall's first flash of terror had subsided, and she appeared to yield more calmly to the situation, though a fiery gleam in her black eyes plainly evinced her impotent fury and resentment.

With one eye on the woman, the other on the road ahead, Magill frequently shouted additional instructions to Patsy, who quickly followed them with merely a nod in response.

Patsy had, of course, no idea as to their precise destination. He was thoroughly familiar with the country through which they were speeding, however, knowing by name nearly every important road in Westchester County, and he soon foresaw in what part of it they were likely to bring up. His anticipations soon were verified. Magill suddenly leaned forward and cried, pointing up the woodland road, then only dimly discernible in the increasing darkness:

"Slow down when rounding the bend, Dolan; then take the lane on the left. It will bring you to an old stone house in a clearing. That's the crib. The going is bad in the lane, but you can make the side yard all right. You'll see lights in the distance. Head for them."

"I get you, Mike," Patsy cried back at him; then, to himself: "I'll get you for keeps, too, by thunder, barring a slip-up."

The touring car swept around a long curve in the woodland road. Scattered lights in the distance came into view. Seen through the trees and from the moving car they appeared and vanished again and again like fluttering fireflies seen in the gloom of a summer night.

Patsy knew the distant settlement. He noted the precise location of the grim old house that also came into view, looming up against a background of woods and the star-studded purple of the sky. A feeble ray of light here and there from the lower windows told that it was occupied, but that the outer blinds were closed and the curtains drawn.

"Swing round to the right, Dolan, and you'll bring up at the side door," Magill directed. "That's the stuff. Leave me to do the talking. I'll put you in right, Dolan, for what you have done."

"I'll do as much for you, Magill," replied Patsy, with dry significance.

He had rounded a corner of the gloomy stone building and stopped some ten feet from a side door. A whistle from Magill was answered with a cry from within, quickly followed by the heavy tread of men on a bare floor. The door was hurriedly opened and a stream of light from the side hall fell upon the touring car and its occupants.

It also distinctly revealed the three men who had responded to Magill's signal. One was a short, swarthy fellow in the twenties, a stranger to Patsy, but whose vicious character was plainly reflected in his sinister face.

Another was tall and gaunt, with squinted eyes and cadaverous countenance; while the third was a square-shouldered, powerful man of fifty, with a smoothly shaved, hard-featured face, evincing imperious will and bulldog aggressiveness.

Patsy instantly recognized the last two men, both crooks and cracksmen of national reputation, and he also realized more keenly that he was carrying his life in his hand.

"Blink Morgan and Ginger Gridley," he said to himself. "I'm in right, by thunder, if I can only stay right and keep things coming my way. If not—gee! I can see my finish."

These thoughts flashed through Patsy's mind while Gridley, striding from the house, cried harshly:

"What's this, Turk? What's the meaning of this? Why——"

"Oh, you back up, Ginger, till I have time to explain," Magill interrupted, springing from the car. "Lend a hand, Morgan, and take this skirt inside. She's the cat who queered our game last night. We've got her where we want her, now, all right. Take her in."

The cadaverous man with squinted eyes, from which he derived his nickname, hastened to obey, Magill having rudely forced the woman to get out of the car while he was speaking, and she then was seized by Morgan and hurried into the house.

Gridley, in the meantime, whom Patsy knew must be the leader of the gang, gazed with frowning eyes from one to the other, and then sternly repeated his question:

"What's the meaning of this, Magill? Why have you brought her here?"

"Because she wouldn't yield to persuasion," Magill curtly declared. "We must force her to tell what we want to know. That could not be done without bringing her here."

"You still think she knows?"

"She must know. She heard all that infernal squealer said."

"But who is this fellow?"

"He helped me get her. He's all right, too," Magill forcibly asserted. "Get out, Dolan, and shake hands with Tom Gridley, more often called Ginger Gridley. You'll find him full of ginger, too, if you cross him badly. He's all right, Tom, and I couldn't have got the skirt without his help. He hired the car with some money I gave him and——"

"Come inside," Gridley interrupted, extending his hand to Patsy. "It's all right, Dolan, if you're all that Magill says you are."

"I'm all that, and something more," Patsy coolly assured him. "You can bank on me as long as I'm used right."

"You'll have no kick coming, Dolan, if you're handing us straight goods," replied Gridley. "If not——"

"Nothing doing in the if-not line," put in Patsy tersely. "This way, then. Lock the door, Phelan."

The last was addressed to the fourth man of the gang, while Patsy followed them into the house. He heard the ominous click of the lock when Phelan turned the key. It told him there was no retreat, no backing out of the hazardous undertaking into which he had fearlessly ventured.

Patsy Garvan, however, had no such inclination even for a moment.

CHAPTER VIII.

PATSY'S CLEVER WORK.

Gridley led the way into a large, square room. Like the exterior of the grim stone house, it bore all the earmarks of antiquity. Great beams crossed the faded ceiling. The discolored walls were partly wainscoted. A smoldering log burned in a huge stone fireplace.

The furnishings in the room were old and threadbare. An oil chandelier lighted the scene. It was suspended above a table, on which were several newspapers and a few old books, also a telephone—the only modern fixture in the room.

Kate Crandall was seated on an old sofa, still bound and gagged, and in charge of Blink Morgan, but, apparently, nerved to meet whatever might follow.

"Sit down, Dolan, till I am ready to talk with you," Gridley commanded, when all hands had entered the room. "Now, Turk, out with the whole business. Where did you pick him up and why?"

"I'll tell you where and why he——" Patsy began.

"You keep quiet," Gridley sharply interrupted. "You'll have your say, Dolan, when the time comes. Sit down and close your trap till you're asked to open it."

"Sure thing, if that's the way you feel about it," Patsy coolly acquiesced.

He saw plainly that Gridley not only was the leader of the gang, but, also, that he ruled with a rod of iron. He realized, too, that he might not be able to blind Gridley as successfully as he had fooled Magill, and Patsy immediately set about casting an anchor to the windward.

He had caught sight of the telephone on the table. He took a chair near it. He knew that he could not use it in any ordinary way, yet he felt that he might craftily turn it to some advantage.

He also knew, of course, nothing about the discoveries Chick had made and the theory Nick was at that moment elucidating in his business office in Madison Avenue, but he did know, at least, that any communication to their office would speedily reach one of them, if not both.

"There's nothing for me in holding up this gang before I get wise to their game," he reasoned, while Magill was hurriedly explaining what had occurred, which then held the entire attention of his three confederates. "I'll wait till I get next to the whole business, and then decide what to do," Patsy added to himself. "I can pick it up, all right, when they begin to talk with this woman. Gee whiz! but I don't fancy that."

Furtively watching Gridley, while Magill was stating how they had met and what had followed, Patsy detected a steadily deepening frown on Gridley's hard-set face.

It smacked of incredulity, of increasing misgivings, and Patsy scented trouble.

"That infernal rascal is not going to swallow my story without something to wash it down," he thought, a bit grimly. "I must sharpen up my wits and be ready for him, if he starts in to put me through the wringer. By Jove, I'll have something else ready, too. I reckon I can work it undetected."

Magill still was talking earnestly to his three confederates.

Patsy leaned nearer the table, resting one arm on it, and stealthily placed three of the books in a pile and gradually drew them close to his elbow. He accomplished this just as Magill ended his story, when Gridley replied with a doubtful growl and a side glance at Patsy:

"It strikes me, Turk, that you have taken long chances."

"Chances?" said Magill, frowning.

"Yes. You really know nothing about him."

"Only what he told me."

"That may not be true."

"But the circumstances and what he has done——"

"All are right as far as they go," Gridley curtly interrupted. "But they are not enough. We must be dead sure of him. We must find out just who he is and where——"

"Say, are you ginks talking about me?" Patsy cut in, with affected resentment.

"Yes, we're talking about you," snapped Gridley. "You're a stranger to us. We might get in wrong, you know, in blindly relying upon a stranger."

"Oh, is that so?" Patsy retorted. "And I might throw a shoe, too, by helping a strange gang in such a game as you guys are playing. What do you want—my pedigree?"

"See here, Dolan——"

"Oh, I'm seeing all there is to see," cried Patsy, frowning. "You'll find out, mebbe, that I'm a law-and-order spotter, or a central-office sleuth."

"It would cost you something, all right, if we did."

"You guys give me a pain. I'll tell you now. I'll show you the way," Patsy forcibly added, seizing the telephone for a moment, but quickly replacing it on the table.

"There is one man who can tell you all about me. He will give it to you straight," he quickly went on, now shouting with pretended resentment. "Call up 47 Madison! 47 Madison! Here, I'll write it for you on the edge of this newspaper, so you'll make no mistake. 47 Madison! Ask who Jack Dolan is, and——"

"Dry up!" snapped Gridley, interrupting, while Magill, Morgan, and Phelan stared from one to the other. "I'll not telephone to anybody. You keep cool, Dolan, and answer my questions. This is nothing for you to get hot about. Who is the party, anyway?"

"He runs a barroom near Madison Avenue," said Patsy curtly.

"What's his name?"

"Jim Donovan. He knows all about me. He'll tell you who I am and whether you can bank on me."

"Sure, Ginger, we can bank on him," Magill now cried impatiently. "He's all right, or he wouldn't have lent me a hand to get the skirt."

"That's right, too," Morgan chimed in confidently.

"He'll go the limit, Ginger, you can bet on that."

"So he will, perhaps, but there was no harm in making sure of it," Gridley now said, less harshly, evidently impressed with these arguments and the attitude Patsy had taken. "He ought not to kick at that."

"Oh, he's not kicking. He's all right, Gridley, from his toes up," Magill insisted. "He knows what he's doing."

The blinded rascal never spoke more truthfully.

Patsy already had turned one of the cleverest tricks of his exceedingly clever career.

All the while during the heated discussion, which had absorbed the entire attention of the four crooks, Patsy had been tapping with his lead pencil on the metal mouthpiece of the telephone.

He had so placed the instrument near the pile of books that they lifted the receiver sufficiently to let its hook rise and make a connection with the number he thrice had shouted—chiefly, of course, for the ears of the exchange operator.

The position of the telephone was not suggestive of the ruse. One would have observed only by chance that the books raised the receiver.

The tapping with a pencil was not noticed by either of the four crooks.

The quick, intermittent taps sped instantly over the wire. They were the taps distinctly heard by Nick Carter in his business office. They conveyed to him what Patsy could not vocally impart—this tapped communication by the ordinary telegraphic code, with which Nick and all his assistants were perfectly familiar:

"Cornered. Stone house, Baldwin Road, Westchester. Half mile east of Granger settlement. Rush. Will hold up gang if——"

Patsy had ended it abruptly.

He saw Gridley's evil eyes cast toward him. He dropped his pencil and with his elbow, as if by accident, he quickly upset the telephone and prevented the detection of his exceedingly artful ruse.

Turning quickly to catch the falling instrument, however, Patsy met with a mishap that threatened to pervert all of the good work he had done. His hasty movements caused something to drop from his vest pocket. It fell to the floor near his chair. He did not see it, but it instantly caught the eye of Turk Magill—the twenty-dollar bank note said to have been used for automobile hire.

It gave Magill's confidence a sudden, terrible jolt. His faith in Dolan oozed out of his every pore. He flashed a swift, significant glance at Gridley, then walked carelessly back of Patsy' chair—only to turn quickly and seize him from behind, confining his arms and crying sharply:

"Sit quiet! If you are all right, Dolan, you have nothing to fear. But——"

"Here's the but!"

It was a big revolver in the hand of Ginger Gridley. He sprang up when Patsy began to struggle, thrusting the weapon directly under his nose and adding fiercely:

"Sit quiet, as you're told, or I'll put you in shape for an undertaker. We'll soon find out who you are and whether you're on the level. Bring a piece of rope, Phelan, and tie him to the chair. Be quick about it."

"Oh, very well," said Patsy coolly. "But what's it all about? Have your noodle boxes gone wrong? Why this sudden change of mind, Magill?"

Magill did not reply immediately. He waited until Phelan came with a piece of rope, with which Patsy's arms were quickly bound to the back of the chair. He

then picked up the bank note, quickly displaying it and crying:

"You have lied to me once, Dolan, and your whole story may be a string of lies, as Gridley suspects. You said you paid for the car with this money. You lied! This is the same bank note I gave you."

"So 'tis," said Patsy, with dry terseness. "But don't let that worry you, Magill. Never worry over picking up a twenty case. You're dead lucky to get it back."

Patsy now saw plainly enough what had occasioned this sudden aggressiveness. He saw, too, that the moment was fast approaching when subterfuge would be utterly futile, when even his identity might be discovered, and he at once took the only course left open for him—that of prolonging the conversation and staving off any desperate move of these rascals, until his combination telephone-and-telegraph appeal could be answered.

For though the telephone receiver was muffled by its position on the books, Patsy had faintly heard Nick's repeated hello and recognized his voice, and he felt reasonably sure, from his succeeding silence, that the tapped message had been received and rightly interpreted.

Magill's face, like that of every man of the gang, had taken on a frown as black as midnight. He shook the bank note in Patsy's face, retorting fiercely:

"Lucky to get it back, am I? Well, you'll be mighty lucky to get out of here with your life, if we find that you have tricked us."

"Oh, I have not tricked you," Patsy calmly asserted. "You're getting all haired up over nothing. I'll explain to your entire satisfaction, Magill, if you give me time."

It was for time, indeed, that Patsy then was playing.

"Out with it, then," snarled Gridley, again taking the ribbons. "What do you mean? How came you with this money?"

"Magill gave it to me."

"But you said you hired the touring car with it."

"No, I didn't," said Patsy. "He only thought I did. The truth is, Mr. Gridley, I hated to let go of twenty bucks that had come so easy. So I hung on to the long green, instead, and stole the touring car from in front of a house."

"I ordered you not to steal one," cried Magill.

"I know it," said Patsy, with a grin. "But I ain't much on obeying orders. I reckoned a stolen car would serve as well for the job we had framed up, and since I was going into a thieving game, I thought I might as well swipe a car and be hung for a sheep as a lamb."

"He's lying!" Gridley said sternly. "See what else he has in his pockets. Search him from head to foot and—what's that?"

Magill had quickly obeyed, thrusting his fingers into Patsy's vest pockets. From one of them he drew out a crumpled scrap of paper, thoughtlessly put there by Patsy after having read it.

"It's a leaf from a notebook," he cried. "Here's writing on it."

"Writing on it?"

"Thundering guns! Whom are we up against?" Magill added, with a growl. "Listen, Gridley, listen!"

Magill straightened up with lips viciously twitching and read it aloud—the communication from Nick Carter to Patsy:

"Kate Crandall knows, but will not speak. Shadow her constantly until otherwise directed. Be governed by circumstances. I'm off for home. Phone me there of any discoveries."

"Gee whiz, it's all off now, for fair," thought Patsy. "I'm booked for all I've invited, unless the chief shows up."

There certainly were indications of it. Gridley snatched the paper from Magill and read it himself, then uttered a terrible oath.

"This does settle it," he fiercely muttered. "A detective—that's what he is!"

"Sure thing," snarled Magill.

"Search him from head to foot, Phelan. We must find out who he is and where we stand. See if that hair is his own and—ah, it's not his own, eh? Off with it, Phelan, the whole business."

Phelan set to work with vicious zest, and in a very few moments he not only had Patsy stripped of his disguise, but also the contents of his pockets spread upon the table—handcuffs, searchlight, two revolvers, a well-filled pocketbook, a handkerchief, keys, and other minor articles.

None of them bore his name and address, however, nor did Nick's brief, though very significant note, bear his signature.

A cry of increasing rage broke from Magill when the truth thus was forced upon him, but Gridley checked him with a gesture, saying sternly:

"You keep quiet, Turk, and let me handle this fellow."

"But, blast him——"

"There aren't any buts," snapped Gridley. "I'm chief of this gang, and what I say goes. I'll wring the truth out of him, you can bet on that, and we then shall know where we stand. Tell me at once—who are you?"

The last was fiercely addressed to Patsy, but Patsy was undisturbed by his ferocity. He met his fiery gaze with a frigid stare, replying indifferently:

"Jack Dolan, just as I've told you."

"That's a lie," snapped Gridley.

"You'd say that if I told you the truth. So I might as well hand you one name as another."

"Oh, is that so? You mean, then, that you won't tell me?"

"I already have told you.

"Let it go at that, then, for the present," said Gridley, with ominous severity. "Who gave you this note?"

"The party who wrote it," said Patsy dryly.

"What's his name?"

"I dunno, Mr. Gridley, on the dead. It has slipped my mind."

"Hang him!" cried Magill impatiently. "He's giving us the laugh. String him up and force him to answer."

"You keep quiet," Gridley again commanded; then to Patsy: "Why were you told to shadow this woman? That hasn't slipped your mind?"

"No; sure thing," said Patsy, with a glance at Kate Crandall. "I can remember that, all right."

"Out with it, then. Why were you told to shadow her?"

"To find out where she went," Patsy dryly admitted.

"By Heaven, if you don't loosen up and tell me, I'll find a way to make you!" Gridley thundered. "Who gave you this note? To whom are you to telephone any discoveries you may——"

He broke off abruptly, hit with a sudden idea, and turned sharply around to his listening confederates.

"What was the number he mentioned?" he cried. "Can you remember it?"

"Sure!" cried Blink Morgan. "Four, seven Madison!"

"Get that telephone book." Gridley pointed to the table. "Look for the police headquarters. See if that's their number."

"Rats!" growled Phelan. "He ain't a police sleuth. He's no plain clothsie. I know that push."

"Try the private agencies, then," snapped Gridley. Look up—stop a bit! Begin with Nick Carter. Try him. Look up his number."

"Holy smoke!" thought Patsy. "Here's where the cat makes her final jump. She'll come clean out of the bag this time. But the rascals do not suspect the trick I've put over on them. That sure is my only anchor to the windward."

Morgan and Turk Magill had turned pale when Nick Carter's name was mentioned, and their fears were completely verified.

For Phelan, suddenly starting up from the telephone book he was hurriedly inspecting, cried excitedly:

"I've got it! Here's the name and number. Four, seven Madison! It's a telephone in Nick Carter's business office."

"Last jump is right," thought Patsy.

Gridley swung round and gazed at him with murder in his eye.

"So Nick Carter wrote this note, did he?" said he, through his teeth. "You're to telephone your discoveries to him, eh? What have you discovered? What has he got on us?"

"Nothing on you that I know of," said Patsy, unruffled. "I was not directed to shadow you fellows."

"What on this woman, then?"

"I don't know for sure, and I don't think he does," Patsy truthfully answered, not yet informed of Nick's deductions and suspicions. "That's dead-straight goods, Gridley, on my word."

Gridley vented an oath and shaped another course.

"Make sure that he is securely tied, Phelan," he cried sternly. "We'll settle his hash a little later. Our first move must be to get the coin—and get it mighty quick, if Carter is dipping into this business."

"That's right, too," Magill declared, glaring at Patsy. "Get the coin and bolt—that's our only safe course."

"We'll take it, too, and take it on the jump," Gridley forcibly added. "Free that woman, Morgan, and be quick about it. She shall tell us what she knows, or—God help her!"

CHAPTER IX.

THE LAST CALL.

Kate Crandall had not stirred from the sofa during the sensational scenes just enacted. They told her only too plainly that she was in the hands of knaves who would shrink from no desperate deed that would serve their ends, and she had no thought but to escape from them by any means she could command.

Blink Morgan hastened to liberate her, while Gridley seated himself directly in front of her and sternly said:

"You've got mighty few minutes, woman, to tell us what we want to know. We have others here who could tell us, but whose traps are tightly closed. We have not killed them, lest we might kill our golden goose; but understand this: We'll end them and you, too, unless you give us the information which——"

Kate Crandall checked him with a haughty gesture.

"One moment, Mr. Gridley, if that's your name," she said coldly. "I can tell you with very few words all that I know. You will believe me, I think, though this man refused to do so."

She glanced at Magill, but he made no comments.

"You were seen two nights ago by him and Morgan," said Gridley, sternly eying her. "They had followed a girl to the home of a clergyman named Maybrick. They saw her look through his library window and then enter his house. They would have listened at his window to her interview with him—but you got there first, and they could not do so without taking risks then thought to be needless. We must know what the girl told him. It's up to you to tell us. You heard what she said, or you would not have remained to listen."

"That is true," Kate coldly admitted. "I heard all that she said to Mr. Maybrick."

"Tell me," said Gridley sternly.

"She told him that her father had recently died; that he was a criminal and had forced her to be one, but that she now was determined to reform. She told him that her father was one of a gang that had recently robbed a bank, and that he had had charge of the stolen funds and had buried them, confiding to her their hiding place while on his deathbed."

"That's the point," said Gridley. "That's the very thing we want to know—where the plunder is hidden."

"I cannot tell you," said Kate.

"Not tell me! Why not?"

"Because I do not know. The girl did not inform Mr. Maybrick."

"What did she say about it?"

"She said she would take him to the spot, and that he could then remove the funds and restore them to the bank. She would not then reveal the hiding place."

"Did she give him no hint?"

"No, none," said Kate. "She appointed a place for him to meet her last evening, which he promised to do. That is all I can tell you."

"Is that true?"

"God hearing me, it is true!" Kate solemnly declared. "I cannot possibly give you the information you expected from me. I do not know——"

"Stop! I believe you," Gridley cried curtly; then, turning to Blink Morgan, he harshly commanded: "Bring the jade up here, Blink, and the gospel sharp with her. I'll find a way to force her to speak."

Morgan seized a lamp and hastened from the room.

Patsy heard him descending the cellar stairs a moment later.

"By thunder, this is the gang that cracked that Westchester savings bank," he said to himself. "Gee whiz! there's half a million at stake. If the chief was right, Jim Nordeck must be the man who buried the plunder, and the girl in question must be Nancy Nordeck."

Patsy did not realize just then, however, how perfectly right Nick Carter had sized up the entire case. This appeared a moment later, when Nancy Nordeck and the missing rector were led into the room, both with their arms securely bound behind them.

The Reverend Austin Maybrick was quite pale, but he

carried himself with dignity, and his fine face wore a look of scorn that told how little he feared the threatening situation. He appeared surprised when he saw Kate Crandall and Patsy, but he did not speak.

Gridley hardly noticed him. He turned at once to the girl who had entered, and then leaned wearily against the nearest wall.

She was a slender, poorly clad girl, who looked ten years older than she really was. Her dark-brown hair was in disorder, her eyes deeply ringed; but her features were regular and she would have been quite attractive, but for a wan and pinched look that told of dejection, suffering, and more of care and misery than often falls upon one of her years.

She also was surprised at seeing Patsy and Kate Crandall, but it appeared only in the sharper glint of her large, expressive eyes, which flashed from one to another, though chiefly at Gridley, with a look of mingled determination and defiance that evinced a fearless spirit in her frail form.

Gridley turned to her with lowering gaze, saying harshly:

"You're surprised at seeing others here, ain't you?"

Nancy Nordeck gave him look for look, with her thin gray lips curling contemptuously. She drew herself up a little, replying with a sinister slang that evinced her lack of refinement.

"Not on your life, Gridley. I wouldn't be surprised at any scurvy trick that you pulled off. What d'ye want, now, that you've brought him and me from the cellar? I'd sooner stay there than be in the same room with you."

"Cut out that lobscouse!" commanded Gridley sternly. "I'm going to show you where you stand, and why here these persons stand whom you've drawn into this mess. I'm going to force you, or them, to tell me where your double-dealing dad hid that plunder."

"Oh, you are!" Nancy exclaimed derisively. "You'll get fat trying to force that out of me. You can't get it out of them, or any one else, for I've told no one. I handed you that at first, but it seems you can't swallow it. I'm the only one who knows where the stuff is planted."

"That is true, absolutely true," said Maybrick, with habitual dignity. "I don't know why you have brought this other woman here, but you——"

"What you don't know cuts no ice with us," Gridley sharply interrupted. "You keep quiet, or I'll find a way to make you. There's a bunch of sleuths on this case who may make trouble for us at any moment, and I'm in no mood to mince matters. This infernal jade, if she's the only one who knows, is going to tell me where to find that plunder."

"Oh, is that so, Gridley?" questioned Nancy, with eyes flashing.

"You'll find it's so."

"And you'll find it isn't," snapped the girl defiantly. "You put that idea out of your block. It might turn you batty."

"See here, Gridley," she added, with a sudden display of deeper feeling. "I've been a bad egg most of my life. It come to me natural, and my old man forced me into it. He's dead now, and I stood by alone and saw the last breath go out of him. I'd never seen the like before. I'd never been where one sees the call of death—the call of death! It told me something I never knew before—but no matter what! You wouldn't know, if I told you—and I couldn't tell you if I tried."

"See here——"

"You see here!" Nancy forcibly interrupted. "I'm going to have my say, and it won't take me long. I'm done with the life I've led, and done with you fellows. That plunder is going back to the bank. That's what I'm going to do for a starter on the new road. I knew you guys would watch me. I reckoned I'd better not take this gent to the place where the stuff is hid, not till I was dead sure you weren't trailing me. So I took him to a fake place first, just to find out, and you and your push were on hand to nail us. You've got us, all right; but you'll not get the coin. I fooled you—and I'll keep you fooled. You'll get nothing from me."

She had told the whole story in those few passionate words, a story that might have filled a volume, and the look on Gridley's face was one to have appalled a less fearless speaker. He turned quickly to his confederates and fiercely cried:

"We'll see about that, pals! We'll find out whether she'll speak. Pull the boots off of this gospel sharp and shove his feet into the fire. She brought him into this mess. Let's see whether she'll pull him out of it. She can do it only by squealing. If not, we'll burn his feet off, and——"

"Say!" cried Patsy. "Cut that, you fellows."

"Cut nothing! You dry up, or we'll cut out the tongue you talk with."

Nancy Nordeck had turned as white as a sheet.

"Keep quiet, my girl, and be brave," said Maybrick, observing her. "Reveal nothing—no matter what these scoundrels do. That is your new duty."

"I'll stick, sir, if you say it," said Nancy, but she was trembling from head to foot.

"Oh, you will, eh?" thundered Gridley. "We'll see whether you will. Grab the gospel sharp, two of you, and——"

But there was no grabbing done of that nature.

Gridley's furious commands were drowned by the crash of a falling door, the rending of blinds and the breaking of shattered windows, at which the heads of policemen and leveled revolvers instantly appeared.

Patsy Garvan guessed the truth, and a yell broke from him.

"Hurrah! Zambo! It's all off! The chief is here!"

Patsy was right. While the words were still on his lips, Nick, Chick, and Danny tore through the hall and rushed into the room, with weapons drawn and blood in their eyes.

Gridley vented an oath and snatched up one of Patsy's revolvers, still lying on the table.

A bullet from Nick's weapon broke the rascal's wrist. He fell to the floor, howling with pain.

Chick had a gun under Magill's nose, and Morgan and Phelan had thrown up their hands.

There was very little to it after that, in so far as opposition was concerned. Within five minutes the crooks were in irons, their captives liberated, and Nancy Nordeck relieved of her fears and started, indeed, on the better road.

Through her the entire amount of stolen funds were restored to the bank, or, more properly, through her and the Carters. She never was prosecuted for any of her past misdemeanors. Nick Carter made sure of that—and

equally sure that Gridley and his confederates received the most severe penalty of the law.

Nick's deductions had been entirely correct, after the disclosures Chick had made, and the remarkable message from Patsy had showed them the way. Nick was right, too, in thinking that Kate Crandall, though informed of the facts, had suppressed them only with a feeling of jealous hatred and revenge for Maybrick and Harriet Farley, whose relief and gratitude over the happy turn of affairs scarce need be mentioned.

THE END.

Kate Crandall very soon disappeared from her customary haunts—but Nick Carter had not seen the last of her, as you will find by reading the story in the next issue of this weekly, No. 122, out January 9th. The story is entitled "The Suicide; or, Nick Carter and the Lost Hand."

RUBY LIGHT.

By BURKE JENKINS.

(This interesting story was commenced in No. 120 of NICK CARTER STORIES. Back numbers can always be obtained from your news dealer or the publishers.)

CHAPTER V.

A JOY RIDE.

I had time enough at Boston the next morning to get a good breakfast before the Portland Express left; and this I partook of in the station dining room. I knew within reasonable bounds when the steamers reached their dock at Portland, and figured that I should have ample time for my plan, which was simplicity itself. I would just be on hand when the boat docked.

And I was. Furthermore, I had stationed myself in a most advantageous position for seeing all who quitted the boat. A pile of boxes, not five feet from the passenger gangway, further favored me by allowing partial concealment of myself. I would simply spot my man when he quitted the vessel; the rest would be regulation shadowing.

A fog had delayed the boat about an hour in entering the harbor, as I learned from a longshoreman; but she finally loomed up directly before us, and the fog entirely cleared as the lines were cast and she was warped to the pier.

Herded into the usual impatient mass, the passengers pressed against the ropes until the final sliding of the gangplank.

Then, at a signal from the officer in charge, they swarmed from her. I didn't miss a face; and I am pretty good at this work. Besides, I counted on seeing a face that was with me constantly now.

But I didn't.

Little by little the crowd thinned. One or two belated ones trotted shoreward; then no more.

I could have been sure that the man and girl hadn't passed me; and I found myself in a predicament.

I waited a few more minutes, but without another individual setting foot upon the plank. Plainly any search I might further make must be done aboard the vessel itself.

But if I did that I would have to quit the gangway, and that, naturally, I was not pleased to do. It was the strategic point.

It was not an overbrilliant plan, or an extremely reliable one, that I finally hit upon; but it was the best I could do under the circumstances.

I caught sight of a shaggy-browed deck hand who had stepped from the freight hold and stood, lounging idly, waiting for the rest of the crew to begin unloading.

I had replenished my cigar supply at Boston; so I approached the man diplomatically.

"My friend," said I, "I'm almost positive that some people I am very anxious to see took this steamer; but I haven't been able to find them. Would you mind watching out for them while I step aboard? I certainly don't want to miss them."

He accepted the proffered smoke greedily enough; but scowled at me from under his cap visor as he grunted:

"How'n tarnation'll I be able to know 'em? What d' they look like?"

"A man with a sort of stoop to his shoulders, and a mighty pretty girl," I replied. "Anyway, you can't fail, for if anybody shows up, it must be that——"

I stopped, for he was scratching his pate in thick-headed brain-working.

"Hold on thar!" he finally growled. "Why, dang me, man, they ain't aboard no longer!"

"Ain't aboard?" I cried. "Why, I could swear they haven't yet crossed that gangplank!"

"Right you are there, my lad," he agreed; "for them there and that same pair o' individools must be the folks as got into a launch out yonder in the harbor when we were stopped by the fog."

"Into a launch!" I echoed frenziedly as a sharp memory shot through me. Surely the couple did have a uniform method of boarding and quitting vessels.

"Better see the purser about it," added the fellow; "there's his window in there. He knows more about it as I do."

He pointed aboard the boat where the brass grill of that officer's office showed up plainly enough. And immediately I strode across the plank and up to the purser, who was figuring at his desk.

He acknowledged my nod genially, and asked what he could do for me.

"If you don't mind," said I hurriedly, "will you tell me all you know about that couple that quitted the steamer for a launch back there in the harbor?"

"Quitted the steamer for a launch?" he cried, in the utmost bewilderment, while he looked at me as though he thought I was demented. "Why, nobody did."

"That deck hand there——" I started to explain as I turned, and indicated where I had come from.

But I got no further; for, at that very moment, I saw the very same deck hand steadying a girl across the freight gangway.

I lost an important minute in my consternation at having been thus so easily outwitted; and I reached the wharf again just in time to see him help her quickly into a taxicab at the pier end. But, before he sprang in himself, he grinned back over his shoulder at me delightedly.

No, I had not exactly recognized that peculiar stoop to the shoulders of the owner of the launch back there at Port Washington, as I had assured myself I would be able to do.

But, if I ever hoped to retrieve myself, I hadn't a moment to lose. I, in turn, hot-footed it to the shore end of the pier, and fortune seemed to favor me here a bit; for there stood another taxi, and its "vacant" flag was flying.

"Follow that cab, my man," I said hurriedly and out of breath from my sprint. "Don't let 'em lose you, and there's money in it."

The little chauffeur grinned delightedly from under his goggles.

"Right-o!" he chortled happily, as he cranked; and next second we jumped into the high speed.

But that first spurt was short-lived, for we came to sharply applied brakes by the time we had but crossed the avenue.

I heard a sharp command as a man dashed from the swing door of a shore-front saloon. Then the door beside me was yanked open, and as quickly closed.

"After 'em now, for all that's in you!" yelled the man who had flopped beside me, and the car lurched forward again.

I whirled on the intruder in a rage.

"Came near losing 'em, didn't you?" said he quietly.

"Pawlinson!" I managed to whisper in my amazement.

"I was a trifle dramatic," he explained easily; "but, from my vantage point of the saloon window yonder, I calculated that maybe two of us might work together better in this case.

"And, besides," he added meaningly, as the cab swayed us to its mad pace, "I want to talk over some things with you."

As I think was natural enough, I had the greatest difficulty in recovering from complete bewilderment. But I did manage finally to blurt out:

"And I, too—I'm in the dark about a good many things."

"Just as I thought, of course," he replied. Then his tone changed to a sharpness, a grittiness of command that didn't set well with me for a whit.

"Now, I want to know," said he, "just who you are and where you stand."

Though I resented the manner of his query, I couldn't but realize that he really was entitled to the knowledge.

"My name is Tom Grey," said I, "and I am one of Chief Garth's men. Last night he detailed me to——"

"Yes, yes. I know about that," he broke in impatiently. "I saw you go in and leave his house. But what I want explained is: How did you happen to mix in on this thing at Port Washington?"

"The merest coincidence," said I, rather lamely.

Then I gave him all I knew about it and the way it had come about that I happened to be swinging my feet from the stringpiece of the dock at that particular moment.

"Well," he said, with a tinge of sarcasm, "it was a very unfortunate coincidence, as you call it; for I can tell you it wasn't any cinch to throw off suspicion in landing that job as engineer of the launch. But I had landed it; and if it hadn't been for you I could have delayed the start until four of my men arrived. They were coming on the next train from New York."

"And so that's why you faked that the engine was broken down?" I blurted, somewhat idiotically.

"Rather!" was the reply; and the sarcasm was no longer veiled. "And you can imagine my surprise when I recognized you entering Chief Garth's place just as I myself was leaving."

"Now, you know well enough, Mr. Pawlinson," said I sheepishly, "that my interference at the launch was natural enough when you grant that I knew nothing of the circumstances, and——"

"Enough of that!" he said. "I'm not harboring any resentment any more, though I still have a bit of a game leg as a souvenir of the incident. But what I do want to know—and what has made me follow you closely from Garth's to this very moment—is: Just where do you stand in this matter? Are you entirely—now that you understand the thing—are you my man?"

"Why, of course," I replied, in as convincing a tone as I could command. But somehow it didn't ring overtrue; for, in spite of myself, I simply couldn't cotton to this man.

"But now, in turn"—I changed my tone—"I should like to know——"

Here the cab swung a corner violently; then we took to the evener going of a well-macadamized road, which seemed to lead almost indefinitely in a dead straight line.

"We're dogging 'em close," said I, pointing to the rear of the cab we were pursuing. "He's a good man," I added, indicating our driver.

"Good enough," replied Pawlinson shortly. "But what do you intend to do next? Just what is the lay, anyway?"

He certainly could make me feel like a fool; and, as a matter of cold fact, I certainly had acted, so far, with every trait of the tyro. Indeed, I had simply counted upon locating the man and wiring the chief of his whereabouts. But now what was I really counting upon doing?

"It's plain enough we've got to dog 'em as close as we can," said I finally. "I don't see any better way now, do you?"

"No, not now," he replied. "But I have heard of better preparedness in my time. But come, come, Grey"—and his tone lightened perceptibly—"we're in this thing together, and there's no use of us rasping against each other any more. I really stand in need of a man, and I hope you'll prove to be he. This case really means a lot to——"

"That's just it!" I broke in. "If you'll stop to think, you'll see that I really don't know a solitary thing about the affairs except that the man ahead of us yonder is wanted. The offense is all in the dark. Don't you think yourself that I'd be likely to enter into the thing with more spirit if I were shown a little more light?"

He eyed me narrowly for a moment, as though he were deciding with himself just how far he would go in explanation. Finally he reached his decision with a grunt.

"You know about the robberies of country places along Long Island Sound?" said he shortly.

He really needn't have said another word to quicken me to the most intense interest.

"I should say I did!" I ejaculated. "Why, it was just from overzeal in one of those cases that the chief gave me the can."

Pawlinson smiled.

"I told Garth I didn't want the game flushed quite then," he explained.

"Then you were back of that, too?" I cried, trying to get through the fog.

"Yes. And the man we are after is Stroth, Carl Stroth."

"Stroth?" I queried dubiously, for the name carried no memory. "I never heard of him."

"I'm prepared to believe that you never did," agreed Pawlinson; "for the man has proven himself wise enough, and big enough, never to appear personally connected with the jobs."

"But how could he——"

"Here," put in Pawlinson. "I'll state it in a nutshell. About the robberies along the Sound, you know. And you know, too, as do the rest of the police, that the tricks were invariably pulled off by water—that is, the lads worked by boat. But what they don't know is that this man Carl Stroth is the head, center, and chief of a gang—a thoroughly organized and completely equipped gang of crooks.

"And just to show you how complete is the equipment—well—quickly stated again—there's a hundred-foot auxiliary schooner, speedy, with a machine gun under a tarpaulin, manned by a crew, a real crew."

He had a sharp, decisive way of narration.

"Sounds fishy, don't it? Fishy, but a fact," he went on. "Now, the way a crib was cracked was this—is, cracked, I suppose I had better say, for they haven't been once checked yet: The schooner lies well off shore—most any distance, in fact. Then the launch—the very launch, by the way, that you figured in yourself yesterday—is manned by experts at this very game. They land, clean out the place selected, back to the launch, back to the schooner. So it's really very simple, as you see. And in its simplicity lies its great effectiveness. The schooner carries regular yacht papers, and everything is quite proper. Get it?"

"I understand," said I slowly; "but I can scarcely believe such a thing possible in this day and generation."

"Why not?" he snapped. "For the life of me I can't see why the field for absolute and out-and-out piracy isn't greater now than ever. Pretty nearly every invention, though it gives pursuit improvement, likewise equips the pursued. The world's very much the same—— But, heavens and earth, man, this is scarcely the time to get too wordy; and I'll let it out now that the only reason I had in all this explanation was to watch your face closely while I was telling it."

"Why, what do you mean by that?" I cried.

"Well," he explained haltingly, "Carl Stroth's hand reaches far."

"How?" I hadn't yet caught the point.

"You see, as I said before," he continued, "I wanted to be dead certain as to just what part you were playing."

"I was playing?" I exclaimed, my temper beginning to rise. "Do you mean to say you thought that I, in any way, was connected with——"

"I mean no offense, my man," said he imperturbably; "and you must remember that I never so much as set eyes on you till yesterday; and what happened then didn't predispose me in your favor, naturally. I mean simply that I have had just about dealings enough with this man Stroth to know that he plays a sure game. And it wouldn't have been the first time for him to plant one of his own men right inside the enemy's camp."

Now, on mature thought, there really was nothing that I should have taken umbrage at in this suspicion; and I certainly ought to have had better control of myself.

But I felt myself fairly rise to boiling point. Words bubbled to me at this implication as to my being a turncoat.

Those words never came out, though, for we skidded briskly around a corner, and were thrown sharply back to the moment and to action.

In the intense concentration of the conversation, both of us had been more engrossed with each other than with our chase; though I did notice, out of the tail of my eye, that the driver of our car had shot back a quick glance over his shoulder at us inside.

Then next second, as I say, we turned a corner—a sharp, right-angle whirl from the straight avenue both cars had been following.

Pawlinson and I both leaned forward in interest, craning our necks for a view through the front glasses of the vehicle.

"What in time does this mean?" cried he, as another vehicle shot by us, coming from the opposite direction.

He started pounding on the glass.

But our driver, for a moment, paid no attention. Instead, he swung the car toward the curb and brought up short before the door of a large house.

We both sprang out to the sidewalk, and as we stood there our little chauffeur hastened to explain.

"Them folks stopped their car and went in that there house," said he, in a funny, staccato voice. "And the car's gone back."

Instinctively Pawlinson and I started to mount the first step of the stoop, though reason might well have prompted another course.

Then the little chauffeur enlightened us further.

"And now I guess that'll be about all to-day, gentlemen," he chortled gleefully, as he slid up his goggles to his forehead.

That kind of eye shield certainly is effective on occasion. For, just as the taxi jumped into speed, it left us there on the sidewalk in our first but most convincing recognition.

"*Stevens!*" we fairly yelled, in unison.

Then we looked at each other.

CHAPTER VI.

A WATER TRAIL.

"A rather close organization, you see," said Pawlinson finally, and with a placidity that was galling.

"What do you mean?" I queried shortly and a bit irritably. The incident hadn't improved the temper of either of us.

"I mean that Stroth had everything pretty nicely arranged, didn't he? For your reception, that is. Even to depositing you way out here, where——"

"Hold on!" I snapped sharply. "You yourself were duped as well as I was, and we've got no time for words. What do you make out of this?"

"What do you make out of it yourself? According to your own account, you left Stevens yesterday headed off somewhere in the launch from College Point."

"But that certainly was he just now," said I.

"Most positively; and his little scheme has thus landed us not only well out of the way of the whereabouts of Stroth, but I know enough of this town to know that we can't get another cab inside of fifteen minutes. How do you figure the little devil happened in Portland, anyway?"

Pawlinson again favored me with one of those searching looks which were making me hate him more and more heartily.

Fact was, I was getting vastly sick of the entire job. But a sudden thought did, momentarily, throw me into ejaculation.

"By Jove, I've got it!" I cried. "Berth number nine!"

"Berth number nine! -Here, come, man, we've no time to waste! We've got to get onto some track immediately."

"And you must have been the one who occupied number three on the sleeper last night," I continued.

"You deduce well," said he, with a grin.

"Well, when I got my own reservation, the ticket seller told me that berth nine was taken from Stamford. So that's it. Stevens, after running the launch somewhere up the Sound toward Connecticut, left it there and boarded the same train, and from there on——"

"And from there on," grunted Pawlinson, "even I can follow. But look here. Why didn't you come out with this sooner?"

"I didn't connect the thing at all," I replied.

"No; it seems not."

"What I can't make out, though," I went on, unheeding his manner, "is this: Why in thunder all the care taken to effect the boarding of the Portland steamer by launch from Port Washington?"

"Simply enough understood, Grey," he said, "when you realize that I had every dock and railway station covered. And a mighty good scheme it was—that of handling the thing by water. I might have known——"

He broke off short. A thought had hit him which brooked not an instant's further delay in speculation. Much as I had come to dislike the man, I could but admire his promptitude and vim.

He tugged me into a brisk run, and we caught a trolley car which he had managed to whistle to a stop on the instant it was crossing the nearest avenue's corner.

"To the water," said he, in indefinite explanation, when we were seated. "The water, that's it! The cue word in this little job, I believe."

"What do you mean?"

"Not until to-day have I ever known Stroth to use Stevens for a thing but water work. Fact is, where Stevens is there's a water trick."

"You mean that you think——"

"I mean that I'd be willing to stake a hefty sum that the schooner is lying this very minute not two hundred yards off Orr's Island, right here in Casco Bay."

"The schooner?"

"Stroth's boat—the one I was telling you about."

"But, heavens and earth, man," said I, raising my voice a bit from the whisper we had kept in the car, "open and aboveboard, broad daylight like this?"

"Didn't I explain that she carries yacht papers, and isn't even suspected by a soul?"

"But you seem to know all about her, and I can't see——"

"I agree with you heartily, my boy. You certainly can't."

What kept my hands off of him, I don't understand, unless it was the reverence I had come to have at his very name as handled among us cubs. And whatever retort I might have mustered was broken short by his jumping off the car suddenly.

"This way," said he, leading a brisk pace that kept my shorter legs almost trotting.

After three blocks of silence, which our speed necessitated, he whirled sharply upon me. We stood on the sidewalk before police headquarters.

"What kind of a gun do you carry?" he barked out.

"Automatic," I replied, tapping my chest nearly under my left arm where I favor carrying a firearm.

"Know how to use it?"

"Yes," said I.

My answer must have carried conviction.

"Then I'll keep you in on the game a bit longer," he decided, talking more to himself than to me. I wouldn't have time now to acquaint a new man with the facts sufficiently. Come on in."

I followed him up the stoop, through the door, and across the hall. I recognized the man at the desk. It was Sergeant Hallins, a man who had once been with Chief Garth.

"Why, hello, Grey!" cried the sergeant heartily, thus proving that the recognition was mutual.

I was distinctly pleased at his genial greeting for two reasons. For one thing, I had a very favorable impression of him from my short, former acquaintance; but, at this moment, it suited me nicely enough thus to prove to Pawlinson that I was not exactly a nonentity.

But Pawlinson, for some reason, did not appear at all to like the fact that we knew each other; though it was aparently not because Hallins failed, in turn, to recognize him.

"Sergeant Hallins," said he, "you got my wire from New York yesterday at this office?"

For a moment Hallins looked from him to me, and back again, until finally I tumbled to the fact that this was the first time they had met each other.

"Mr. Pawlinson," said I, by way of introduction. "You gentlemen must pardon me, for, of course, I thought that you knew each other."

Hallins shot Pawlinson another swift glance, a puzzled one, before he replied:

"You mean the wire about the schooner, Mr. Pawlinson?"

"Naturally; since it was the only one I sent," drawled the Washington detective in that sarcasm which I now saw was not for me alone. "Did she arrive in Portland Harbor to-day?"

"Yes," replied Sergeant Hallins. "The schooner *Ruby Light* arrived here shortly after dawn, and dropped her hook off Orr's Island, as usual."

There was a distinct hesitancy, coupled to what was almost bewilderment, in Hallins' tone.

"And you have kept note of her movements to-day?"

I could see the imperiousness of the tone grated upon Hallins as much as it had upon me; but he replied civilly enough:

"One of my men in the rôle of a bumboatman was on her decks for upward of an hour. It seems that she is fitting out for a rather longer run than usual."

"Ah!" grunted Pawlinson sharply. "And she sails—when?"

"That he was not exactly able to gather; for the boatswain, a decidedly uncommunicative chap, had to be handled softly."

"Uh!" broke in the other. "The boatswain was in command?"

"Yes. It seems that he was waiting for Captain Stevens."

In spite of myself, I started at the name; for as yet I hadn't stumbled to what way Hallins could have known more about the vessel than I myself. But it came out next breath.

"You must pardon me, Mr. Pawlinson," continued Hallins haltingly, but as though he must put in the words, "but are you quite positive that you are on the right trail? Dead positive, that is?"

"Why do you ask?" snapped out Pawlinson viciously.

"Simply because I could be almost as dead positive that everything is right in that quarter. I've known that boat for some years now. Even when I was working in New York, I used to spend my vacations in Casco Bay, and she has been owned all that time by Mr. Stroth. Why, I've even met the owner myself, and upon one occasion was his guest aboard for an afternoon."

"When was that?" gritted Pawlinson, in a voice which, for all its harshness, carried some uneasiness.

"About four summers ago. Now, what I'm getting at is," went on the sergeant hurriedly, "the schooner is still owned by the same gentleman, a known yachtsman and above suspicion."

"Oh, is he?" Pawlinson came to finality. "Well, now, to come to the point, yes. I do know exactly what I am doing; and, furthermore, I've no time to waste starting to do it. You say your man who got aboard to-day couldn't get even an inkling when the start was to be made?"

"Nothing from those on board. But this my man did gather: The vessel can't start without gasoline; or, at least, the *Ruby Light* usually does carry considerable."

"How is that? Can't start? What's to keep her?" Pawlinson's interest was intense as he fired the questions.

"Why, it happens that the supply tank at the club float where she usually fills sprang a leak early in the day, and the consignment of reserve barrels of 'gas' can't reach her till eight-fifteen at the earliest."

"Good!" Fine!" fairly chortled Pawlinson, rubbing his hands together delightedly. "No, you're right, Hallins, she'll not start without gasoline, and plenty of it. She never does. She uses her engine a lot."

Then his voice whirled from gloating to practicality; then to a bit of uneasiness as he glanced over his shoulder out of a window where the sky was dimming to dusk. "What time is it now?"

Hallins glanced at his watch.

"Five to seven."

"As late as that?" cried Pawlinson. "I can't believe it. But here, man, we've still time to make it. I want ten of your best men, which, with myself and Grey here, will make twelve. And I want the police launch—she's fast, isn't she?"

"The police launch?" cried the sergeant bewilderedly.

"Why, yes, of course! You have such an article, haven't you? Come, come, man, I'm in no mood for delay!"

"But your later wire!" blurted out Hallins.

"My *later* wire?" Pawlinson fairly yelled. "What in thunder are you getting at?"

"Here!"

Hallins strode hurriedly over to his desk and caught up a yellow telegraph blank.

"I received that not thirty minutes before you stepped in yourself. I thought, of course, you knew what you were about when you sent it."

"I sent it? *I?*" shrieked Pawlinson, as he tore open the sheet, where we both read:

"Send patrol launch well manned immediately to Trawly's Rock. My orders from Washington.

"PAWLINSON."

"And you have sent it?" cried Pawlinson.

"I did wonder that the thing wasn't in cipher," admitted Hallins, getting scared. "But I didn't dare disregard the command from Washington. But who did send it?"

"I wonder if that Stevens——" I broke in excitedly.

"Oh, you do wonder, do you, Grey?" Pawlinson snarled. "Well, for once I shouldn't be surprised if you were right."

Nothing could quench the biting vitriol of his tongue.

"Checkmated at every turn! And a pretty pair of asses we are!" he was pleased to put himself thus in with me.

"Now look here, Hallins," he went on, while I inwardly admired the rapidity with which he shifted the greatest chagrin to action. "And look sharp! When did you send the patrol launch?"

"I guess it must have been ab——"

Here the door swung open, and a clean-limbed young fellow strode over to Hallins.

"Launch's gone, pop," said he boyishly. "And the men're tickled to death at the little outing."

Then the lad sensed the tenseness of us all.

"Why, what's the matter?"

"Matter enough!" said Pawlinson shortly. "But no time now to explain to you, boy. Now look you, quick! You have just come from the water front?"

"Yep!" answered the lad, not a bit abashed. "I was here when dad gave the order—he's training me for the game, you know—and I trotted on down to see 'em start, and——"

"You like the water—know boats? Most boys do. Eh, what?"

Young Hallins grinned.

"Hear that, dad?" he cried. "Me like boats, eh?"

"The boy's crazy," explained Hallins, regaining his composure somewhat. "He's got the fastest thing in the harbor—built it himself, too." The proud parent showed here.

"She's good for twenty-five an hour flat," boasted the youth.

"Where is that boat now?" barked out Pawlinson, and then I caught his drift.

"Down at the float. Old Pete looks out for her for me."

"What's she worth?" snapped Pawlinson. "Don't be afraid to make it high, my boy. Washington's paying for her. I've got to have her."

"Don't want to sell her," came the reply, in as sharp a decision as Pawlinson's own. "But you can have her to use on that kind of jay for nothing."

The boy warmed to the snap of adventure.

"But do you know how to run one?" came his next query. "I'll go myself and run her for you."

Pawlinson cast an interrogative glance at Hallins.

"No," declared the father decidedly. "He's a bit young for his spurs yet, Mr. Pawlinson. But, by all means, take the launch. Anything we can do to right matters, and to——"

"Why, of course! Why didn't I think of it before?"

interrupted my companion. "You, Grey, are up on motors. Yesterday proved that; and I'm glad now I kept you—even after to-day. Come, lad, lead us to that speed boat of yours; and, take my word for it, you won't lose by it."

A five-minutes fast run brought us to the waterside; and there, moored cleverly in a sheltered nook behind some piling, lay a slim, gray craft of which that boy builder might well be proud.

Pawlinson and I clambered into the cramped cockpit, and luck favored us in that I was familiar with the make of engine.

I immediately took hold and started her.

"Good! You know 'em!" chuckled the boy; and I felt the genuine compliment.

"How far to Trawly's Rock, lad?" cried Pawlinson, taking the wheel.

"About ten miles from here, and right past Peak's Island," yelled young Hallins. "That's the quickest way."

Then he raised his voice even higher, for the engine was too silent a affair:

"But if you're intending to land at the rock, you'll have to have a dink."

"A dinghy?" grumbled Pawlinson petulantly. "What for? Seconds count now, you know."

"Here, I've got you," replied the boy, whirling on an old fossil who had been silently viewing our departure. "Old Pete'll lend you his punt. She tows like a breeze. She will cut down your speed; but you just got to have one if you mean to land there."

Old Pete mumbled something around his pipestem.

"How's that?" I queried impatiently.

"Oh, that's all right," assured young Hallins. "I'll make it all right with Pete after you've gone."

And, without further parley, he passed me the painter of one of those small scows that have justly won their way into favor among yachtsmen as tenders.

At first mention of this small delay, Pawlinson had gritted out an impatient imprecation; but a glance I later cast at him saw his brow clear at a thought.

A quickly thrown clove hitch of the punt's painter; then I threw in the propeller. The shaft was chain-driven.

She picked up speed immediately; and, even towing the small boat as we were, I reckoned on about seventeen miles an hour. But, notwithstanding, I was impatient at the check, for I soon saw that the lad had not overestimated when he spoke of twenty-five for the beauty.

"Confound that scow!" I ejaculated as we headed out into the bay.

"Can't be helped, my boy," replied Pawlinson almost genially. "It might come in useful, you know."

I believe now that he must have had his plan cooking even then.

TO BE CONTINUED.

HAZING THE PROFESSOR.

A party of smart young students in a small town in Kentucky, last winter conceived the brilliant idea of hazing their new teacher. It was decided to invite him to accompany them coon-hunting some night, and, after leading him about in the woods until completely bewildered, to abandon him, and leave him find his way back to the village or remain in the woods all night. Now, as the pedagogue was a stranger, and weighed nearly two hundred pounds, this scheme seemed too funny for anything, and many a hearty laugh did they have over it. The invitation was given and accepted, and the appointed night came, cold and clear, with several feet of snow on the ground. Everything moved on as per arrangement, the professor seeming guileless and unsuspecting, but from beneath his puffy eyelids now and then gleamed an amused twinkle. The party had plodded through the snow for several hours, and the ringleader was about to give the signal to disperse, when the professor sank to the ground with a groan of agony.

"Oh, oh!" he moaned; "oh, one of my attacks again! Quick, boys, for mercy's sake, get me to a place of shelter, or I'm a dead man!"

Talk about scared boys! Here they were five miles from the nearest house, and an apparently dying man on their hands. Something must be done, and quickly, too. A litter was hastily improvised, with coats for cushions, and the suffering professor gently laid thereon, and homeward they started, a sorry set of practical jokers, taking turns at carrying their massive preceptor. No sounds were heard but the heavy breathing of the professor and the grunts of the students, who were straining every nerve to keep from jostling the patient. After what seemed to be scores of miles, the weary, bedraggled fellows carefully set down their burden, to snatch a few minutes' rest before entering the town, which was within a stone's throw, when, what was their surprise to see the professor rise leisurely from his comfortable couch, and coolly observe:

"Much obliged, boys! much obliged! But one word: The next time I wished to play practical jokes I wouldn't select an invalid for a subject."

The boys are not over it yet.

THE PERILS OF COAL MINING.

To perceive fully the dangers of a coal miner's life, it is necessary to review the extraordinary conditions which threaten it.

If workmen in coal mines had no other reason for complaint than that of toiling in perpetual lamplight and in an overheated and impure atmosphere, they would have no more cause to regret their fate than have many other men who live by the labor of their hands. But although the ordinary conditions of a workingman's life are often oppressive and injurious, they are in almost every instance less violent and destructive than those to which colliers are exposed in their daily work.

As soon as an opening is made in a bed of coal, chemical and mechanical changes of serious importance are commenced, and they are all more or less opposed to the permanence of the work. The oxygen of the atmosphere, aided by the force of gravity, lessens the barrier between the imprisoned gases and the opened places of the mine. Of these the most abundant and dangerous are carbonic-acid gas or choke damp, and carbureted hydrogen or fire damp.

Carbonic-acid gas accumulates in disused workings, and not unfrequently escapes into the roads and workings. As it has a greater specific gravity than any other gas found

in a coal mine, it drops to the floor of the opening in which it happens to accumulate. For this reason, the upper part of a driving or a wicket may have a comparatively pure atmosphere, while the floor and parts immediately above it are occupied by a gas, which, if breathed, would be destructive to animal life.

When opening old works, or when approaching places partly opened, the miner must be cautious for his life's sake. He is meeting, without the power to resist, an invisible and insidious enemy—a life-threatening agent, that strikes without warning. If a system of ventilation exist in the mine, there will be a means at hand of driving from its hiding places a considerable accumulation of the deadly gas, if care be taken to watch the approach of the enemy. If there be no sufficiently comprehensive scheme of ventilation, the choke damp must be diluted, or, in other words, the gas must be mixed with the overlying atmospheric air. This is often done when the accumulation is locally inconsiderable, by the wafting of a miner's jacket backward and forward till the air can be safely breathed.

The other kind of gas just mentioned, is not less dangerous to the workmen. This gas is known as carbureted hydrogen, or fire damp. As it is lighter than atmospheric air, it rises to the roof of the mines in which it is found, and is there mixed with the mine atmosphere, by occasional disturbances or by the process of diffusion. Unmixed with other gas, carbureted hydrogen destroys human life. But when the gas is largely diluted by atmospheric air—say, thirty parts by volume of atmospheric air to one part of the gas—the presence of fire damp is made known to the miner by a pale-blue cap with a brownish tinge over the top of the lamp flame. This gives a warning more and more imperative, until the proportion is only thirteen parts of air to one of fire damp, when the mixed gases become explosive. This quality continues until the proportion is one of fire damp to four or five of atmospheric air, when the explosiveness of the mixture is lost, and ordinary lights of the mine are extinguished.

AN UNEXPECTED MEETING.

The northern limit of the brown bear's habitat is as yet undetermined, but I have seen them in the interior of Alaska as far as latitude sixty-seven degrees, and they probably range still farther," said Uncle John, when the boys had asked him for some points about these beasts. "My first encounter with one of these animals was a startling experience for me, and, I have always thought, equally so for the bear.

"We have been working up against the strong current of the Koowak River all day, and toward nightfall pitched our tent at the base of a high bluff forming the right bank of the stream.

"While supper was being prepared, I climbed the bluff to get a look at the country, and was walking leisurely along, with my gun carelessly held in my left hand. The top of the bluff was densely covered almost to the edge with spruces and alders, and the undergrowth was so thick that it was impossible to see more than a few feet through it. Ahead of me a cluster of rocks offered a temporary place to sit down and enjoy the view, and I made for it.

"Just as I reached the nearest rock, a tremendous shaggy animal rose apparently from under my feet, and I immediately recognized in him the brown bear, of whose fierceness the natives had been telling me for weeks.

"My first instinct was to shoot, and I probably would have done so had my gun been in my right hand; but at the first motion I made, the bear reared on his haunches and was so formidable looking that I concluded to wait and see what he intended doing. After a moment's hesitation, he dropped on all fours, and, with wonderful quickness, turned and sprang out of sight in the dense undergrowth.

"When I returned to camp and related my experience, Tah-rok, my native guide, assured me that the bear must have recently concluded a heavy meal, as otherwise he would have most certainly attacked me."

Some officers from one of the vessels of the Bering Sea fleet went ashore at Herendeen Bay during the summer on a deer hunt, and one of the party saw a bear about one hundred yards distant, eating berries.

Without a thought of the consequences, he raised his gun and fired at the animal. The shot went wide of the mark, but at the report of the gun the bear started for the hunter on the dead run. His charge was met by a shower of bullets from the officer's repeater. Although badly wounded, the infuriated brute did not hesitate an instant, but rushed straight at his enemy.

When within about ten feet of the hunter, the bear rose on his haunches and prepared to close. Blood was pouring in streams down his body. One bullet had shattered his upper jaw, but he was still so full of fight that the outcome of the struggle would have been extremely doubtful had not another of the party arrived and ended the fight by shooting the brute through the brain.

An examination of the bear's body showed that it had been struck six times. Three of the shots were in parts of the body ordinarily considered vital, and would doubtless have ultimately caused death, but the vitality of these animals is almost incredible, instances having been cited of their running over one hundred yards after being shot through the heart.

TWO SAD CASES.

A professional beggar was standing with a board in front of him, with the inscription: "I am blind," when a gentleman threw a dime on the ground.

The blind man instantly picked it up.

The gentleman said:

"Why, I thought you were blind."

The fellow, after a moment's hesitation, looked at the board, and then said:

"I'm bless'd if they haven't made a mistake, and put a wrong board on me this morning. I'm deaf and dumb."

The above reminds us of another affecting story of a kind-hearted lady who was passing a street beggar who bore on his breast a placard declaring that he was deaf and dumb. The kind lady read the placard, and said to the beggar:

"My good man, how long have you been deaf and dumb?"

"Ever since my birth," the man ingenuously answered.

"What a heart-touching affliction," said the good lady, as she placed half a dollar in the poor fellow's outstretched palm, and passed on.

THE NEWS OF ALL NATIONS.

More Money for Farmers.

The important farm crops of the United States this year are worth $104,000,000 more than the value of the same crops last year. The total value of the important crops is given as $5,068,742,000 by the government authorities. Adding the value of the other crops, to be announced later, will make a record figure in the nation's production.

This year's wheat and corn crops are the most valuable ever grown, the wheat and apple crops are record harvests, and the potato crop is the second largest ever raised. The huge wheat crop and the increased price of that cereal, the large corn and apple crops, and the increased price of oats, barley, and rye more than offset the loss in the value of the cotton crop resulting from the war.

The values of the important crops, based on the average prices paid to producers on November 1, and their values last year, follow:

	1914.	1913.
Corn	$1,885,807,000	$1,730,021,000
Wheat	858,056,000	587,863,000
Oats	484,390,000	425,150,000
Barley	100,839,000	97,469,000
Rye	34,387,000	26,153,000
Buckwheat	13,297,000	10,444,000
Potatoes	219,396,000	230,741,000
Sweet potatoes	42,751,000	44,706,000
Hay	803,353,000	785,662,000
Cotton	462,483,000	880,360,000
Flaxseed	18,966,000	21,192,000
Apples	144,963,000	124,470,000

A corn crop of 2,706,000,000 bushels is estimated by the government. This yield compares with 2,447,000,000 bushels a year ago, or an increase of 150,000,000 bushels. The crop has turned out much better than was expected early in the season.

Woman Builder of Death Machines.

A charming, gentle young woman—"Bertha Krupp," as she is called by the soldiers; the Baroness von Bohlen, as she is known in Germany—is associated with the European war in many fantastic ways.

Bertha Krupp, as the principal owner of the great Krupp works at Essen, is the kaiser's gun maker. When she was to be married she was so important a personage that the kaiser acted as her godfather. The young nobleman, Baron Gustave von Bohlen und Halbach, was the choice of his majesty. Not only have the Krupp works furnished a vast amount of efficient field artillery to the Germans, but they have supplied the monster siege guns with which the Belgian and French forts have been smashed.

Modest and unassuming, the young mistress of the Krupp works is beloved by all who know her, and especially by the thousands of workmen at Essen, whose admiration she aroused when, shortly after her father's death, she began supervising the operation of the works and bravely remained close to the big guns while they were being tested. From the income from the manufacture of the guns a fund is set aside by Bertha Krupp to help some of her fifty thousand pensioners. At large orphan asylum is supported by the Krupp money. Throughout Germany the baroness is noted for the charities that she supports with her immense fortune.

And the soldiers, whenever they hear the noise of the terrible Krupp guns, say: "Bertha is talking again."

Girl Soldier's Escape.

A girl soldier's thrilling escape from death or capture is thus described by a correspondent at Petrograd, Russia:

"The daughter of Colonel Tomilobbskaya, of the Russian army, who, in male uniform, distinguished herself in the fighting at Avgustovo some time ago, has been wounded for the third time. She is in East Prussia with her father's command. While on a scouting tour, she unexpectedly came upon a patrol of German hussars. She quickly wheeled her horse and dashed away, but was hotly pursued in the direction of a stream which the hussars evidently thought she would not attempt to cross. When near the stream, her horse was struck by bullet, and fell, but the girl disengaged herself, and, plunging into the water, swam across. She was wounded in the arm, but managed to stop the flow of blood and got to the Russian lines."

A large number of women are serving in the Russian army, several have met death in battle and others have been sent back wounded. In last week's *Blade* mention was made of a famous Cossack girl trooper who has been at the front.

Engine Hurls House One Hundred Feet.

A freight train went wild in Chicago, plunged across Sheffield Avenue, picked up a two-story house occupied by two families of sleepers, carried the building bodily almost half a block, then stopped. Two children, one four and the other two years old, were instantly killed. Four other persons who were sleeping in the house were rescued by firemen practically unhurt.

Edward Kranch, and Helen, his sister, were the ones killed. Their father and mother, sleeping in another room on the ground floor, escaped, being thrown wide of the house. The family of Edward Matison, including his wife and two children, were safe on the second floor.

Man Kills Dog With His Fist.

James G. Harvey, of Hazleton, Pa., who at the age of nineteen defeated John L. Sullivan in a calf-lifting contest, showed his strength by killing a dog with a blow of his fist, when the animal had been rounded up to be killed and no revolver was handy.

Giants May Train in West.

Manager John J. McGraw, of the Giants, is considering a plan to take the New York club to California next spring to train. Secretary John B. Foster stated recently that nothing definite had yet been done in the matter, although the club was considering it carefully. When McGraw visited California last year with the world tourists he was impressed with the fine climate in southern California, and was advised to train there by Charles A.

Comiskey, of the White Sox, who has taken his team to the coast for several seasons.

Manager McGraw does not mean to desert Marlin Springs, Texas, entirely, because the Giants have a permanent training camp and baseball park there. If the plan goes through, the Giants will spend three or four weeks on the coast and then go to Marlin for a couple of weeks to put on the finishing touches of the training work.

It is believed that the Giants would be a big attraction on the coast next spring, because there will be thousands of Easterners there to attend the Pacific-Panama Exposition. The Giants have trained at Marlin Springs for several seasons, and, as the place is so well suited for the purpose, it is not likely that the Giants will abandon their camp there. Secretary Foster is already arranging several exhibition games to be played, throughout the South on the Giants' return trip North.

Hunter Shot by Playful Hound.

Theron Ferguson, twenty years old, of Wilkes-Barre, Pa., was shot by his own dog while hunting on the mountains. He received a full charge in the hip, and his condition is serious. Stopping to rest after a long tramp, Ferguson was examining the shotgun, when his hound playfully jumped upon him. The foot of the dog touched the trigger, and the cartridge exploded.

Disobeyed His Orders, Killed 600 Germans.

At the battle of Vailly the French were obliged to fall back, and were unable to get away with all their guns. They had time to bury most of them, though, and the only one they did not bury was spiked so that the Germans could not make any use of it.

It was with this gun that a gunner of the battery covered himself with glory. The gun crew had been ordered back, but he declared that he would not abandon the gun while any ammunition was left. He methodically emptied shell after shell into the Germans, who were moving up in serried ranks only a half mile away. Closer and closer they came, firing volleys as they advanced, but the gunner stood his ground and still had a dozen shells left when they were not more than three hundred yards away. At this distance he bowled them over like ninepins, but nothing could stop them. He let fly his last shell at only fifty yards, and did such awful execution that he was able to remove the breechblock and make good his escape, notwithstanding that he had received a bullet between his ribs.

Hardened as they were to slaughter, some of those who witnessed the deed turned faint at the ghastly sight of the mangled Germans, more than six hundred of whom were blown to pieces within five hundred yards of the gun.

War Cuts Canal Income.

John Bucklin Bishop, former secretary to the Isthmian Canal commission, who returned recently from Panama on the United Fruit steamship *Tenadores*, said that the income of the canal for October amounted to $376,000, which, if continued, would mean $4,500,000 a year.

"Governor Goethals has said," Mr. Bishop asserted, "that the operating expenses of the Panama Canal amount to four million dollars, so that the canal will clear five hundred thousand dollars. The war in Europe has made a big difference in the traffic through the new waterway, and the increase when peace is proclaimed will be considerable."

"What about the slides in Culebra Cut?" he was asked.

"Colonel Goethals is not worrying over the slides in the canal," he said. "The big dredges were ready for just such an emergency, and made short work of the two slides on the other side of Culebra Hill."

Mr. Bishop said that ships could be passed through the canal in ten hours now, instead of twelve hours, as previously estimated.

Courtney, at 65, Works as Usual.

In fine health and full of vigor in body and mind, Charles E. Courtney, since 1883 the coach of the Cornell oarsmen, recently celebrated his sixty-fifth birthday. He received a number of congratulatory messages, and a group of the oarsmen called upon him that evening, but the old man did not take a holiday. He went to the boathouse at eight o'clock, as usual, and did not return home until six-thirty o'clock in the evening. Courtney seems no older than he was at sixty, and his capacity for work appears to be undiminished.

"Boy Zeppelin" Earns Coin from War Kites.

In a little workshop in Cleveland, Ohio, a twelve-year-old boy spends his spare hours these days turning out big, ferocious-looking "war" kites, which he sells to his playmates. The boy is Stuart Jenney, a seventh-grade pupil.

Young Stuart caught his war spirit almost from the day he read that the European powers had declared hostilities. For several years he has been the most skillful kite maker of his district, and has sold many kites to his playmates, but he has abandoned the conventional types for the fighting kind.

Stuart's "flyers" soar skyward in flocks after school hours, pirates of the air, their long tails armed with jagged bits of glass designed to cut the cords of rival kites that are not maneuvered cleverly enough to dodge their foes.

For overparticular strategists Stuart designs and makes special warriors, collecting, of course, special prices for these models. He carefully selects the wood, linen, and paper that go into their construction, and will not let a kite leave his "factory" until he has personally tested it.

Kite battles mean more orders, for once a cord is severed while the kite is sailing high, that particular pirate reaches the earth a mass of broken sticks and torn paper, totally beyond repair.

Penn Out of Aquatics.

Pennsylvania does not expect to do anything wonderful in an aquatic way this winter, but Yale, Columbia, and Princeton are figuring on winning the intercollegiate championship. The swimming season will not begin in earnest until after the holidays, but long before that time the coaches will know just about where their teams will finish. Princeton will not be able to get its water-polo team out until late, for nearly all the men on this team played on the football team also.

Yale looks forward to a brilliant season. Two of the last year's champion intercollegiate squad and three members of the record-breaking relay team are available, besides splendid material in every other event. There is no doubt but what the New Haven swimmers will take a lot of beating. The title bearers in question are the fancy

diver, McAleenan, and the plunger, Smith; the relay record holders, Captain Summers and Marr and Hoadley.

In addition to these star performers, the squad has several likely veterans, including sprinters Schlaet and Mayer and the middle distances, Gould and Moise, and some most promising new recruits. Leaders among the latter are Rosener, of Andover, credited with breaking the fifty-yard standard in practice; Wooley, one of the speediest dash swimmers seen at New Haven this fall, and Ferguson, of Chicago, heralded a real comer at the furlong. Evidently there isn't a weak spot in the team.

Prospects for water polo are not quite so good, though they may improve. At present, Van Holt, the best backfield player, is suffering from an injury sustained in football, and there is a question of Leish, the great scoring forward, being in the line-up. Should they prove available, Captain Steiner will have the nucleus of a strong sextet, for Kent, Mayer, and Smith are experienced men. Otherwise it may be difficult to find candidates of championship caliber for the vacant positions.

The swimmers of Harvard will be again obliged to use the Brookline baths for practice, since the dormitory pools are too small for the purpose, and the long-promised natatorium at Cambridge still remains a pious wish.

Matthew Mann, the advocate of the elementary crawl, will coach the squad. He says the Crimson has excellent material, but it is hopeless to believe that it can be promptly developed, owing to the difficulty of getting the candidates to take often the inconvenient trip between Cambridge and Brookline.

Among the best watermen trying for positions in the varsity team are Captain Fullerton, able to do around 1:00 for 100 yards and 2:40 for the furlong; Seymour, almost as fast at the two distances, and Gibbs, Wentworth, Jackson, and Darling, good for about 0:27 at 50 yards, and warranted to furnish likely representatives of the sprints and relay races.

Elopers Drowned in River.

Ivan Heer and his sweetheart, Miss Ruth Rechman, both of Cave-In-Rock, Ill., were drowned in the Ohio River a few miles below Evansville, Ind. Heer and Miss Rechman were in a skiff eloping to Caseyville, Ky., where they were to have been married. Their skiff struck a snag and the craft rapidly sank. Occupants of a launch near by tried to save the elopers, but were unsuccessful.

Heer was about twenty-two years old and Miss Rechman was twenty, and a popular young woman of Cave-In-Rock.

Tires of Looking at His Own Gravestone.

Francis M. Collins, eighty-eight-year-old war veteran, has grown tired and lonely sitting at the foot of his own grave in Forest Home Cemetery, at Milwaukee, Wis., admiring the flowers and the monument—especially the monument. Collins has decided that man was not meant to be alone, on the earth or under it, and is planning to get married.

For twelve years Collins has been a daily visitor at the grave. For a long time it was a source of pride for him to look at his name and war record carved in a solitary magnificence on the handsome tombstone. He prepared for his burial by a budget filed with a certificate for five hundred dollars with a local bank.

The solitary name on one side of the stone began to look forlorn and lonely. The veteran got the habit of romancing on how nice it would be to have another name—her name—on the opposite side. There was no particular woman then. But there is now. Her name is Orrie Viola—something—but Collins will not tell the rest of it.

The other day a stone carver came trudging through the cemetery with his tools. He hunted around in the vicinity of the chapel until he found a plot that looked like a little garden, and beside it was an old man with a patriarchal beard. When the stone carver left, the name "Orrie Viola Collins" smiled back at the afternoon sun, and Collins was smiling up at the newly carved name.

Some New Inventions.

A cotton manufacturer of Westbrook, Maine, has patented a machine for the harvesting of cotton which has just been successfully demonstrated at Fairweld, S. C. The harvester picks the cotton by sucking the lint out of the bolls by compressed air, somewhat on the order, apparently, of the vacuum cleaner.

A mechanic of St. Louis, Mo., has invented a "non-skidder," which is intended to prevent the possibility of accident to an automobile by making it impossible for the car to slide off the road. The attachment consists of two shoes fastened to the rear of the car, between the wheels. When the car begins to skid, the driver touches a button, and the shoes instantly drop to the surface of the road, stopping the car. The shoes are about eighteen inches long and three inches wide, made of hard metal with a corrugated undersurface.

A device perfected by an inventor of Wakefied, Mass., enables the motorman of a street car to see the entire interior of the car or to have an unobstructed view down the outside. It consists of a series of mirrors arranged at angles in a small tube, through which images of any object are reflected.

For use in small gatherings there has been invented an attachment for phonographs that illustrates songs as they are sung by projecting lantern-slide views on a screen hung in front of the phonograph horn.

Bears Eating Farmers' Pigs.

Bears are causing the farmers around Grifton, N. Y., annoyance. Although there has been no drought to drive them from the swamps, the animals, for some unexplainable reason, have come out of the low grounds in numbers, and their inroads upon the farmers' hogs and other stock have caused the latter to take steps looking to the eradication of the bears.

Mayor F. I. Sutton and J. E. Forrest, of Kingston, are out in quest of bear in the vicinity of Stonington Creek, and hope to bag one or more of the intruders.

Pushing Buttons President's Job.

Pushing buttons is one of President Wilson's jobs. Nothing of big national interest is properly "opened" except by the president. The latest request was for him to press a button at the White House officially opening the new Houston, Texas, ship canal. In a like manner the president the other day opened the new union passenger station at Kansas City, Mo.

The cost of clearing a line for one official flash, involving the suspension of service over thousands of miles

of wire, and the attention of scores of men, is borne by any telegraph company over whose line it goes. There is a tacit understanding between the telegraph companies and the White House that the wire service will be free for all events of sufficient importance to merit the president's attention.

The greatest button-pushing event in the history of the White House was the president's flash which blew up the Gamboa Dike in the Panama Canal and allowed the water to enter the big ditch for the first time.

The next big event of this kind will be the opening of the Panama-Pacific Exposition, at San Francisco, next year.

Several days before the date of the official opening the telegraph offices at points along the route selected for the flash will be notified that at a certain hour, on a certain day, the president will open the exposition. About thirty minutes before the time set the Washington office will "cut in" a wire from the White House and attach it to one of a certain number of wires assigned for exclusive service between Washington and Chicago. It is the custom to rig two circuits out of Washington, to prevent possible accidents or mistakes that would delay the message.

Chicago is notified that wires, say No. 119 and No. 104, Washington and Chicago, will be used for the flash. During the full half hour prior to the sending of the flash these wires are kept absolutely clear of messages, except the signals of the wire chiefs, who are rigging the circuit. "Repeaters" are placed at frequent intervals along the route. The "repeaters" are simply instruments used to add further energy to the circuit at different points. They do not really repeat the president's flash. The initial impulse given at Washington carries straight through to the coast.

When the Chicago office learns that Washington is using wires 119 and 104, these wires are promptly hooked up with other wires through to Omaha, Neb., or Ogden, Utah, and the word passes along the line. The Ogden operator finishes the circuit and San Francisco is advised to make ready for the flash.

At precisely the time named the president steps to a button in the White House offices, gives it a push, and the exposition opens.

It is the special nature of the flash that wears on the nerves of the telegraph men. If a presidential message should go wrong, they would account it a big blot upon their records. As soon as the flash has gone through the circuit is dismantled and the telegraph traffic flows on.

Four-room Dwelling Hacked from Rock.

James Homer, of Inez, Ky., is building, or rather making, one of the strangest houses ever heard told of in this section of the country. He has undertaken to pick and hack a four-room dwelling place out of a solid rock, which is seventy-five feet high and projects out of the mountainside some forty or fifty feet. Homer claims he will have it finished by 1916. He said, in a recent interview:

"Some people may think I am crazy, but I am perfectly sane. This is a vast undertaking, but I consider nothing is impossible to the man that has a will. 'Where there's a will there's a way,' you know.

"I think this will be an ideal home for my wife and four children, and when I have it finished I am going to give a house party, one that will be a surprise, indeed, to the people of Rockcastle Creek, for this will be the only house of the kind that I ever heard of, and probably the only one that any of my neighbors have ever seen."

Gives His Life for Science.

G. R. Mines, a professor of physiology at McGill University, Montreal, Quebec, met death mysteriously in his laboratory at the university. Just what caused his death is not known, but Principal William Peterson believes Professor Mines, in the course of experiments upon himself in his chosen branch of physiology, dealing chiefly with the phenomena of the heart action and respiration, lost his life through the apparatus which was attached to his body getting out of order in some unknown manner.

Wireless an Aid to Science.

Actual difference in time between Washington, D. C., and Paris, France, has been established by the recent series of exchanges of wireless telegraph signals between the big naval wireless station at Arlington and the French government station at Eiffel Tower.

The results of the tests are hailed by scientists as a distinct step forward toward errorless calculation of time and distances. It is approximately 4,000 miles from Washington to Paris and the greatest distance over which previous tests of a like nature has been made was 600 miles.

England Training 1,250,000 Soldiers.

All England is talking of the stirring address which Lord Kitchener, the war secretary, made at the Lord Mayor's banquet, in which he combined high praise for the army now in the field and appearing for war, with an appeal for further recruits to carry the arms of Britain to success.

Lord Kitchener said:

"The British empire is now fighting for its very existence. I want every citizen to understand this cardinal fact, for only from a clear conception of the vast importance of the issue at stake can there come that great national and moral impulse without which governments and war ministries and even armies and navies can do but little.

"We have numerous advantages of resources, men, and material, and that wonderful spirit of ours which has never understood the meaning of defeat. All these are great assets, but must be used judiciously and effectively.

"I have no complaint whatever to make about the response to my appeals for men. The progress of the military training of those already enlisted is remarkable, but I shall want more men and still more until the enemy is crushed. Armies cannot be called together as if with a magician's wand. In the process of their formation there may have been discomforts and inconveniences in some cases—even downright suffering. I cannot promise that these conditions will wholly cease, but I can give you every assurance that they have already greatly diminished, and everything that administrative energy can do to bring them to an end assuredly will be done.

"The men who have come forward must remember that they are enduring for their country's sake just as their comrades are in the shell-torn trenches. The introduction of elaborate destructive machinery with which our enemies had so amply and carefully supplied themselves has been

the subject of rauch eulogy on the part of military critics, but it must be remembered that in the matter of preparation those who fix beforehand the date of war have a considerable advantage over their neighbors.

"So far as we are concerned, we are clearly open to no similar suspicion.

"Our losses in the trenches have been severe, but such casualties are far from deterring the British nation from seeing the matter through. They will act rather as an incentive to British manhood to prepare themselves to take the places of those who have fallen."

In paying tribute to the leadership of Sir John French, commander of the British expeditionary force, and his generals, and to the high efficiency and courage of the army, the war minister said:

"I think that it has now been conceded that the British army has proved itself to be not so contemptible an engine of war as some were disposed to consider it." He concluded:

"Although our thoughts are constantly directed toward the troops at the front and the great tasks they have in hand, it is well to remember that the enemy will have to reckon with the forces of the great Dominion, the vanguard of which we already have welcomed in this country, in the very fine body of men forming the contingents from Canada and Newfoundland, while from Australia, New Zealand, and other parts are coming in quick succession soldiers to fight for the imperial cause. And, besides all these, there are training in this country more than one and a quarter million of men eagerly waiting for a call to bear their part in the great struggle."

Ridding Country of Cattle Plague.

How did the foot-and-mouth disease start its epidemic in America?

The answers to questions like this are always lost in mystery. But at the great Chicago stockyards, closed for the first time since 1865, the story is told that at Niles, Mich., where the plague first broke out a few weeks ago, there is a tannery which imports hides. It imported a sizable consignment of water buffalo hides, so the story runs, and imported them via Italy. They came packed in Italian straw. They were unpacked and the straw carelessly thrown to one side.

A Polish farmer in the vicinity, with the sound thrift of the Old World, saw this straw, and inquired about its eventual use. He was told he could have it if he would haul it away. He hauled it. He fed it to his little herd of cattle.

But the cattle, instead of waxing fat and prospering, began to grow thin. They developed a fever. They put their heads down and began to lick their hoofs. The local veterinary authorities had their attention directed to the case. The government came in, and the foot-and-mouth disease was officially declared extant in the United States.

The foot-and-mouth disease, which has caused a quarantine on live stock in so many States, is violently contagious among animals. It is characterized by sensitive sores on the tongue, palate, and hoofs of the animals. The sores become red and raw within a very short time, and cause the disease to spread rapidly to other cattle. Government experts have declared that the only way to stamp out the disease is to destroy all animals affected.

In the world-famous Union stockyards of Chicago infected cattle were killed in great droves, regardless of value, and were buried in quicklime to prevent any possible spread of the disease. Similar methods have been followed by cattle raisers of States where the quarantine is in force. The work of cleaning up and disinfecting the Chicago stockyards progressed rapidly. The only sign of excitement coincident with the shutting down of the yards was a shotgun onslaught on the hundreds of thousands of pigeons ordered killed by the State and government authorities. They were doomed as disease-germ carriers. The work of driving the rats from the yards was started. Poison fumes were sprayed into the holes and crevices in the brick pavements in those pens in which the work of cleaning and disinfecting had been completed.

In all the vast acreage of cattle pens, ordinarily marked by tossing horns and eddies of sheep and swine, there was little life save where men handling the disinfecting machine waged battle against the germ of the costly malady. The twenty-five miles of streets and alleys within the inclosures were wintry in appearance, snow white with the lime spread over them.

The resumption of slaughtering at the Chicago yards will not mean the restoration of business to its normal volume because the business in stockers and feeders will be affected. Two of the greatest cattle-producing States, Illinois and Iowa, are under the government ban because of the presence of the foot-and-mouth contagion. When Delaware was put under quarantine its was the thirteenth State in the list. By special order of the United States department of agriculture, Canada was included in the quarantine area. No evidence of foot-and-mouth disease had been discovered in the Dominion, but it was learned that infected cars had been sent over the border and the order was issued to prevent their return.

The government authorities took steps to prevent the disease from getting a foothold in the ranges and grazing sections of the West. "The government will kill all infected animals," said Secretary of Agriculture Houston. "It will stop all movement of infected cattle from infected areas, and will do everything to localize the epidemic."

That the foot-and-mouth disease cannot be transmitted to human beings by eating the flesh of diseased animals, but can be contracted by drinking unboiled milk or butter made from the milk of an infected cow, is the statement made by doctors who have studied the disease.

Fate Calls Upon a Modern Valjean.

This is a story of a few sheets of legal cap paper faded and yellow with age, a modern Jean Valjean, whose quarter of a century of peace and industry may end in a black cloud of misery and death, and a passionate crime in which brother slays brother.

Unlike Victor Hugo's celebrated character, this modern Valjean has not mounted the rostrum of justice to proclaim his guilt and true self before the wide world, but, to the contrary, the man accused refuses to acknowledge the alleged facts and criminating evidence that the hand of the law spreads before him.

Recently carpenters moving an old desk in the district attorney's office in Pittsburgh, Pa., accidentally broke open a locker, from which tumbled a number of dusty papers. Among them were the verdict and minutes of a coroner's inquest and an indictment for murder. The papers recalled the crime of almost a quarter of a century ago.

In 1862, Joseph Gantt and his brother Frank were ex-convicts. Both had served their time, reformed, gone to work, and were living with their parents in Pittsburgh.

On the day before the murder, just twenty-two years ago, Frank Gantt was picked up by the police on the strength of his former record.

At the dinner table the following night, Joseph accused Frank of returning to his old ways of crime and bringing more disgrace on their aged parents. The charge resulted in an argument. The table was upset as both men jumped to their feet. The lamp was dashed to the floor and the room was in darkness.

When lights were restored, Frank was dead on the floor from a knife wound and Joseph was gone.

The story was told at the coroner's inquest. Sisters and brothers were brought before the grand jury, and an indictment was returned.

Then Fate smiled on the man who wished to reform, tucked the papers in an out-of-the-way corner of the district attorney's desk, and left them a score of years until her smile faded.

When Assistant District Attorney John Dunn brought the papers to the office of the county detective department in Pittsburgh, Detective E. E. Clark was interrogating Miss Ethel Reese in regard to another case. The girl is not as old as the musty papers.

"Ever hear of Joe Gantt?" asked Dunn.

"Not that I remember," replied the detective.

"I have," spoke up the girl. "He's my uncle. His name is Clark now, and he lives in Chicago. Why?"

"Oh, nothing," said Dunn, as he walked out of the office, making notes on his cuff.

Dunn and Detective Edeburn came to Chicago. With the assistance of Captain Halpin, of the detective bureau, and two other Chicago detectives, they began to hunt for "Clark." They located the man. His arrest followed. Then Miss Reese arrived in Chicago with Detective Clark.

"That's Uncle Joe," she said, when she confronted "Clark" in Captain Halpin's office. "He came back to Pittsburgh to visit us last spring. Why is he arrested?"

"He is wanted for the murder of your Uncle Frank," replied the captain. The girl fainted.

Meanwhile, the man—whether Clark, Gantt, or Ghent, as the Pittsburgh newspaper twenty-two years ago called him—is silent except to insist that he is Frank J. Clark and not Gantt. He refuses to recognize the girl.

During the last twenty-two years the man says he has lived "clean." He worked all over the country. He served his country against Spain in '98. He fought at Santiago as a member of the Fifth Mississippi Volunteers—known as "the Immunes," because all the men in it were immune to tropical fevers.

Last of all, Gantt married and settled down in a little home at 2128 West Harrison Street. He has been working as a structural ironworker.

His wife is a deaf mute—the man himself is now approaching the sixty-year mark—and the smile of the kindly Fate has faded.

Ocean-to-ocean Auto Travel.

With the exception of such slight improvements as may be made during the winter months, the principal transcontinental routes are now in approximately the shape they will be at the beginning of the heavy travel to the Pacific Coast Exposition early next year.

Late reports to the American Automobile Association from all quarters indicate that the road improvements on the principal cross-country lines during 1914 have been underestimated. This is particularly the case on the western end of the "Northwest Trail."

The cities, counties, and towns on the line of the Lincoln Highway in the Far West have also made very great improvements. The "All-Southern Route" as a whole has been greatly improved during 1914, and will not present very serious difficulties to tourists who decide to go leisurely across that way in 1915.

Maps and specific information can be had by addressing A. A. A. headquarters, Riggs Building, Washington, D. C.

Indian Waif-king to Assemble Tribe.

He is king of the remnant of a great race now scattered to the winds—David Seattle, of the Snohomish tribe. Lean as a wolf was the king, and footsore with far travels, when he entered the office of the *Seattle Star*, asking that paper to help him in locating his widely dispersed tribesfolk.

Until a few moons ago he did not know he was king, this stolid Indian lad, who had been placed in St. Joseph's School, in Tacoma, when a baby. He did not remember when he came or who brought him there. On the register he is simply "David Seattle." No hint of royal inheritance appeared to mar his democratic playing and boyish quarreling with school companions. Assertions of kinship would only have served to call down upon him the wrath of his playmates, and who were certain that royalty rode on magnificent chargers and was heralded with blaring trumpets.

Charlie David Seattle, only living son of Chief Seattle I., waits for death. He is very old, and his work is done.

There came to him not long ago in Snohomish an Indian of another tribe. "I met one of your people in Seattle," he confided. "His name is like yours—David Seattle."

The old man, strangely excited, came to the city and found David.

"Where," he asked, "were you born? And who was your father?"

"I do not know," said the young Indian. "I was put in St. Joseph's School when a baby." And he told the old patriarch all he knew, which was little enough, though it served.

"It was I who put you there," said Charlie David Seattle. "Your father was dead some time before. I took you from your dead mother's arms. You are the oldest son of the oldest son of Chief Seattle. You are the head of the Snohomish people."

It was thus plain David Seattle learned he was a king. Chief David Seattle has been visiting as many of his people as he has been able to locate. Sometimes he bought railroad tickets. At other times he stole rides on freight trains. And often he walked. He went to Oregon, wandering east of the Cascades, journeying to remote corners of the Olympic Peninsula. Finally he reached the northern end of British Columbia. Wherever he heard of Snohomish Indians there he went.

"There are," he said, "two thousand three hundred of my people left. Of these I have visited two thousand. They were glad to see me."

That is why he appealed to the white man's newspaper—to help him find the other three hundred.

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